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# Protagonists of Seven Representative Plays of Joanna Baillie in Relation to Aristotelian Principles of Characterization

Ruth McGugan  
*Loyola University Chicago*

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PROTAGONISTS OF SEVEN REPRESENTATIVE PLAYS OF JOANNA BAILLIE  
IN RELATION TO ARISTOTELIAN PRINCIPLES  
OF CHARACTERIZATION

by

Ruth McGugan

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## LIFE

The writer of this thesis, Ruth McGugan, was born in Quincy, Michigan, on June 16, 1928.

She attended public elementary and high schools in Michigan and the University of Michigan. After receiving a B.S. degree at Loyola University in 1953, she attended Alverno College and Columbia University.

From 1955 to 1957 she taught at St. Charles High School, Coldwater, Michigan. During the summer of 1956 and the year of 1957 to 1958, she returned to Loyola University for graduate work in English.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is the comparison of the protagonists in seven representative plays by Joanna Baillie with the criteria for an ideal tragic protagonist which Aristotle suggests in the Poetics.

Although Miss Baillie is not a significant figure in the history of English literature, her contemporaries show their regard for her importance by both praise and criticism. Scott's habitual generosity and his personal regard for Miss Baillie may influence his judgment when he says that she is the best British dramatic writer since Shakespeare and Massinger.<sup>1</sup> Another contemporary, Lord Francis L. Jeffrey, reviews some of her plays shortly after their publication and points out their theatrical and literary deficiencies.<sup>2</sup> His evaluation is confirmed by the brief and inglorious stage-history of the seven plays that were actually produced,<sup>3</sup> and the loss of reputation their author has suffered

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Walter Scott, Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, I (London, 1894), 99.

<sup>2</sup>[Lord Francis L. Jeffrey,] Joanna Baillie, Plays on the Passions, Vol. II (London, 1802), anon. rev., Edinburgh Review, II (July 1803), 269-286; Miscellaneous Plays (London, 1804), anon. rev., Edinburgh Review, V (January 1805), 405-421; Plays on the Passions, Vol. III (London, 1812), anon. rev., Edinburgh Review, XIX (February 1812), 261-290. These reviews are attributed to Jeffrey in Jeffrey's Literary Criticism, ed. D. Nichol Smith (London, 1910), pp. 210-216.

<sup>3</sup>Margaret S. Carnhart, The Life and Work of Joanna Baillie (New Haven, 1923), pp. 109-165.

in the century since her death in 1851. In spite of this criticism of the plays, Jeffrey affirms Miss Baillie has "genius."<sup>4</sup> Many histories of English literature give Miss Baillie scant, if any, attention, but Bertrand Evans ranks her "among the foremost Gothic dramatists."<sup>5</sup> Allardyce Nicoll says her recognition of the necessity for "central emotion" in a drama, after its neglect since the days of Otway, makes her plays "landmarks in the history of the English theatre."<sup>6</sup> However, he also notes that she almost always loses "what might have been tragic effect in an out-pouring of sentimentalism."<sup>7</sup> After further criticism of her style and lack of stage technique, he summarizes his estimate of her efforts as "interesting . . . works . . . now to be read rather for the light they throw on contemporary conditions than for any great intrinsic merit."<sup>8</sup>

Even though Miss Baillie is not a major dramatist, there is value in a study of her plays that seeks evidence of Aristotelian influence. Use of the Poetics as a standard of comparison has been a common practice in literary criticism for twenty-four centuries. In an attempt to account for this unique distinction, F. L. Lucas says it is neither because it contains infallible rules for writers and critics of tragedy, nor because it was written in such close proximity to the origin of the subject. Lucas believes that the Poetics is de-

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<sup>4</sup>[Jeffrey,] Edinburgh Review, V, 421.

<sup>5</sup>Bertrand Evans, Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947), p. 200.

<sup>6</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, Early Nineteenth Century Drama: 1800-1850, Vol. IV of A History of English Drama: 1660-1900, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1955), p. 157.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 162-163.

ferred to, age after age, because Aristotle asks the vital questions about the nature of art, drama, and tragedy; questions that must be asked before one can work through the maze of accidental conventions that develop in any age, to the substance of tragedy.<sup>9</sup>

One issue involved in this study is what Aristotle says specifically about the ideal tragic protagonist in the general discussion of the Poetics. The other issue is how the protagonists--Basil, De Montfort, Ethwald, Orra, Osterloo, Romero, and Henriquez--act and react in Miss Baillie's "tragedies" on the passions. The actual and ideal protagonists thus revealed have sufficient likeness to make a comparison possible.

The history of this comparison, per se, consists of one comment made by Margaret S. Carhart. She says that Miss Baillie's "treatment of the protagonist is definitely Aristotelian in tone," and cites page ten in the 1851 edition of the Works.<sup>10</sup> However, Miss Carhart does not indicate which statement she is using as the basis for her conclusion or cite any evidence in the plays to support it. Miss Baillie expresses only one idea on page ten or the preceding one that is reminiscent of Aristotle: "Tragedy brings to our view men placed in those / elevated situations, exposed to those great trials, and engaged in those extraordinary transactions, in which few of us are called upon to act."<sup>11</sup> The remainder of page ten is devoted to the exposition of her theories on the didactic

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<sup>9</sup>F. L. Lucas, Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics (London, 1928), pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup>Carhart, p. 72.

<sup>11</sup>Joanna Baillie, The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie, complete in one volume, (London, 1851), p. 10.

function of tragedy, here, specifically, that it should show the necessity for control of passions, and the failures of various poets to shape their works for this end. Miss Carhart's conclusion is apparently based on "men placed in those elevated situations," but the results of the present investigation do not confirm it. There are incidental similarities between Miss Baillie's theory and practice and Aristotle's theory, which appear in chapters III to V of this thesis, but the comparisons in chapter IV reveal instances in which Miss Baillie's attempt to practice her theories on the ends and means of tragic writers results in protagonists with many un-Aristotelian attributes.

Chapter II of this thesis lays the ground-work for the study by educing from the Poetics a few principles to which Joanna Baillie's protagonists can be compared. Because Aristotle has been so popular as a literary standard throughout the years, an immense number of translations and interpretations of his work have accumulated. These are both a help and a hindrance in isolating his principles for the ideal tragic protagonist. The translation by Ingram Bywater is most frequently cited in this study, but there are occasional references to Samuel Butcher's translation when use of a different word helps to develop an idea. Various commentaries on these translations and on the original Greek were also consulted in the attempt to determine Aristotle's concepts. There are many points on which the several interpretations are in substantial agreement, as well as some on which there are as many opinions as there are commentators. No attempt has been made to follow any interpretation consistently, but references to F. L. Lucas's Tragedy are most numerous in the discussion of Aristotle's theory of tragedy, and Aristotle's Poetics, by Humphry House, is most frequently cited in the discussion of characterization in general and of the tragic pro-



tagonist in particular. Although Lane Cooper and W. Hamilton Fyfe are less frequently cited, it does not necessarily follow that they are proportionately less valuable. Barrett H. Clark's notes provide brief information on numerous other commentaries than the four which were studied in detail.

Chapter III contains a summary of Joanna Baillie's theories of tragedy. Although a detailed consideration of how the author practices these theories in writing her plays is beyond the scope of this study, some understanding of her theory is necessary for a study of her protagonists. The comparisons of the Aristotelian and Baillieian theories which concludes the chapter foreshadows the studies in the next chapter.

In chapter IV, a summary of the action in each play precedes a comparison of its protagonist with the Aristotelian principles educed from the Poetics in chapter II. The first three principles are concerned with the relationship of the protagonist to the play as a whole, viz., he should act within the organic unity of the plot, with necessity and probability, and in such a way that he expresses a universal truth about human nature. The fourth principle prescribes the personal qualities of the protagonist, i.e., goodness, marred by a hamartia, stature, capacity for experiencing peripety and discovery, appropriateness, likeness to reality, and consistency. In the comparisons, incidents from the plays are cited to illustrate the conformity or non-conformity of each protagonist to the Aristotelian ideal. Because Miss Baillie made some changes in the plays after their initial publication, the text used in this study is The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie. Her authorization of this edition, shortly before her death, in 1851, distinguishes it as her final decision on how the plays should stand.

Finally, chapter V contains a summary of significant observations made in the course of the comparisons and the conclusions that logically follow from them.

## CHAPTER II

### ARISTOTLE'S PRINCIPLES FOR TRAGIC PROTAGONISTS

Organization of parts within the unity of the whole is so important to Aristotle, that a detailed consideration of his concept of any one of the elements of tragedy, such as the tragic protagonist in this thesis, cannot begin immediately. Aristotle's concept of an ideal tragic protagonist is the logical result of his theories of the nature of imitation, the function of art, the essential qualities of drama, and the specific end of tragedy. The tragic protagonist, as Aristotle conceives of him, is an important, but relatively remote cause of the pleasurable response in the audience of a tragedy.

The controversy over Aristotle's precise meaning of the word mimesis is almost as old as the Poetics. Lucas prefers representation to the traditional imitation as a more just rendering of Aristotle's word, because it is a better description of an activity undertaken in order to recapture "feelings, not appearances. . . emotions like those of life, and yet unlike."<sup>1</sup> Fyfe interprets the imitative process in art as holding a mirror up to nature so "it presents a picture in which the confused and therefore unintelligible facts of life are reduced to coherence."<sup>2</sup> Both Lucas and Fyfe indicate the difficulty of trying to

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<sup>1</sup>F. L. Lucas, Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics (London, 1928) pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>W. Hamilton Fyfe, Aristotle's Art of Poetry: A Greek View of Poetry and Drama (Oxford, 1940), p. xxii.

reconcile all the Poetics if Aristotle's mimesis is debased to an equivalency to mimicry. But Aristotle does use it in this sense at times. Humphry House suggests a method for reconciling these concepts when he says that Aristotle "is trying to maintain a delicate balance between contradictory extremes; this mimic element" and something not strictly representationalist that will "correspond to the moods of men's souls."<sup>3</sup> Illustrating this attempt to maintain a balance in the general theory, House says it is similar to the balance Aristotle tries to maintain in his theory of dramatic character, where the ideal is between the extremes of characters "'like' ourselves" so they will win sympathy and "as they ought to be, not as they are," so their actions will have that "greatness and coherence necessary to the unlikelike unity of a dramatic plot."<sup>4</sup>

Aristotle classifies tragedy as one of the several "modes of imitation,"<sup>5</sup> whose cause lies in man's natural inclination to imitate and the natural delight he takes in works of imitation as a means of learning, i.e., "gathering the meaning of things."<sup>6</sup> But man has another appetite which must be gratified by harmony<sup>7</sup> or order in the thing imitated,<sup>8</sup> which is even more important to the

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<sup>3</sup>Humphry House, Aristotle's Poetics: A Course of Eight Lectures (London, 1956), p. 125.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Aristotle, De Poetica, trans. Ingram Bywater, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, Random House ed. (New York, 1941), p. 1455. Subsequent references to Aristotle's Poetics will be to Bywater's translation in this edition unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 1457.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 1458.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1462.

development of Aristotle's theories in the Poetics. Drama is the mode of imitation which employs language as its means<sup>9</sup> and "imitators" who "represent the whole story dramatically, as though they were actually doing the things described,"<sup>10</sup> as its manner. Tragedy differs from other kinds of drama in what it represents and the specific function it fulfills.<sup>11</sup> Bywater translates Aristotle's definition of tragedy as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions."<sup>12</sup>

There is little question about what Aristotle means by dramatic form, although Lucas points out that there are instances of description even in drama, e.g., messengers describe or recite when they inform the audience of pre-plot or off-stage events.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle's opinions about language will be considered later,<sup>14</sup> with Diction, one of the six elements of tragedy. Even though Bywater, Butcher, Cooper, Lucas, Fyfe, and House all use the same word, serious, as the first descriptive of the action of a tragedy, they do not agree about its connotation. Lucas regards it as a method of contrasting Tragedy, "a drama which

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<sup>9</sup>Aristotle, p. 1455.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1457.

<sup>11</sup>Lucas, pp. 13-14.

<sup>12</sup>Aristotle, p. 1460.

<sup>13</sup>Lucas, pp. 18-19.

<sup>14</sup>See pp. 13-14 and 32.

renders human life seriously . . . with Comedy, which renders it grotesquely."<sup>15</sup> Until recently, House accepted the popular view that Aristotle means "having importance" or "weight" by the word he uses. House noticed, however, that Aristotle uses the same word, translated as serious in the definition of tragedy in chapter VI, when he refers, in chapter II, to the ethical nature of man, although he uses a different word for that concept in the more complete discussion of the ethical nature of man in chapter XV. From this, House concludes that Aristotle means the action of a tragedy should involve a question of ethical importance. Such an interpretation supports this writer's belief that Aristotle makes an ethically good purpose part of the standard equipment of the tragic protagonist.

Translators agree that Aristotle says tragic drama should arouse the emotions of pity and fear in the audience, and that these emotions account in some way for the pleasurable response of the audience. But almost every translator and commentator has a different interpretation of Aristotle's theory of how pity and fear produce pleasure. Fyfe claims the pleasure of tragedy is that of vicarious experience,<sup>16</sup> but similar in effect to Byron's suggestion that eruption of the "lava of the imagination" in poetry "prevents an earthquake."<sup>17</sup> Lucas says that catharsis is a "medical metaphor" showing the similarity of the emotional purgation effected by tragedy to the physical process.<sup>18</sup> Cooper denies this, and states that catharsis is a special, hybrid "medico-literary term" limited in

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<sup>15</sup>Lucas, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Fyfe, p. xvi.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., quoted on p. xvi.

<sup>18</sup>Lucas, p. 24.

its application to the observed fact that a "feeling" of relief follows the witnessing of a tragic spectacle.<sup>19</sup> But Cooper goes on to show that this question is not a critical one in the Poetics, when he points out that Aristotle is more concerned with the means of arousing pity and fear than in how they, in turn, produce pleasure.<sup>20</sup>

Lucas is also interested in terminating discussion on a non-essential question, viz., the relationship of ethical purpose and catharsis. He says that the implication that tragedy should have a moral effect may be merely the result of Aristotle's defensive attitude toward the Platonic condemnation of poetry,<sup>21</sup> and that even if the audience does derive moral benefit from a tragedy, that effect may well occur without any spectator being aware of it.<sup>22</sup> According to Lucas, the essence of Aristotle's theory of tragedy is not moral effect, but "the pleasure we take in a rendering of life both serious and true."<sup>23</sup> This emphasis on the necessity for truth in tragedy is much more consistent with and pertinent to the spirit of Aristotle's whole theory of tragedy than is any aspect of the controversy about catharsis. House comes even closer to the focal point of Aristotle's theory when he says that the poet, "by the skill of his art, by his power to bring the mind into sympathy . . . provokes the pure pleasures of

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<sup>19</sup>Lane Cooper, The Poetics of Aristotle: Its Meaning and Influence (Boston, 1923), pp. 31-33.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Lucas, pp. 33-34.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

exercising thought and emotion and the senses of sight and hearing upon themes which would be, but for the way he treats them, only painful. Some themes, as Aristotle says in several places, remain nothing but painful because the poet treats them wrongly. And this I think we recognize to be true of many interesting and 'moving' plays which fall short of being great tragedies."<sup>24</sup>

In the Poetics, Aristotle is certainly more interested in the activity of the poet in shaping his work of art than in the reactions of members of the audience. Of course a tragic drama is the means of arousing pity and fear in the members of the audience, from which they derive pleasure, and the means must be shaped to achieve that end. In chapter XIV, Aristotle says, "not every kind of pleasure should be required of tragedy, but only its proper pleasure," i.e., "that of pity and fear, which the poet has to produce by a work of imitation;" so the causes of it "should be included in the incidents of his story."<sup>25</sup> According to the definition of chapter VI, this work of imitation is "an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself."<sup>26</sup> Magnitude and complete are two of the most significant words in the definition, and Bywater's translation brings out the relationship between them. Magnitude, in the sense of limitation of scope, insures and can even cause the completeness, wholeness, or organic unity of the work. Aristotle says "a whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end," and that "to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must not only present a certain order in its ar-

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<sup>24</sup>House, p. 120.

<sup>25</sup>Aristotle, p. 1468.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 1460.



arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain definite magnitude."<sup>27</sup> This is a general principle that applies to all forms of art, and Aristotle stresses its application to the art form he is most concerned with in the Poetics. This principle may be obscured by the splendor of parts of a work, but, for Aristotle, it is the sine qua non of beauty in life or in tragedy. It is the principle on which he bases his controversial doctrine that plot is the most important of the six parts of a tragedy, and the even more startling corollary that tragedy is impossible without action but is possible without character.

The poet's problem is to combine the six parts of a tragedy--Plot, Character, Thought, Melody, Diction, and Spectacle--in a whole that will accomplish the particular purpose of tragedy. Aristotle considers the last three briefly, to emphasize the importance of the others. He acknowledges that Spectacle has the power to evoke the requisite emotional response,<sup>28</sup> but it is not essential. A well-wrought tragedy should be capable of arousing pity and fear by a mere reading, and the better poet relies on his own ability, rather than on that of the stage technician.<sup>29</sup> Diction is "the composition of verses,"<sup>30</sup> or the expression of the thoughts of the characters in words,<sup>31</sup> and its perfection is "to be at once clear and not mean."<sup>32</sup> In his discussion of epic poetry, Aristotle also cautions against allowing "an over-ornate Diction" to obscure the revela-

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<sup>27</sup>Aristotle, p. 1462.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 1467.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 1462.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 1460.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 1462.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 1478.

tion of Character or Thought,<sup>33</sup> and logically, this applies to tragedy as well. Aristotle's treatment of Melody is even briefer, but he says it is "the greatest of the pleasurable accessories, [i.e., Melody, Diction, and Spectacle] of Tragedy."<sup>34</sup>

In defining the six parts of a tragedy, Aristotle says that the Fable or Plot, i.e., "the combination of the incidents or things done in the story,"<sup>35</sup> is the most important. He is consistent in this doctrine throughout the discussion, but perhaps two other references, external to the discussion of tragedy per se, give an even better indication of how important it is to him and why it is so. He says that an epic, like a drama, should be based on a single, complete, whole action, so the work can "produce its own proper pleasure with all the organic unity of a living creature."<sup>36</sup> He then contrasts such an action with the usual practice in a history, which deals "not with one action, but with one period and all that happened in that [period] to one or more persons, however disconnected the several events may have been."<sup>37</sup> Again, when Aristotle is trying to emphasize the continuity of nature in the Metaphysics, he says "the observed facts show that nature is not a series of episodes, like a bad tragedy."<sup>38</sup> House advises that Aristotle's meaning is easier to understand if plot,

<sup>33</sup>Aristotle, p. 1483.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 1462.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 1460-61.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 1480.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Aristotle, Metaphysics, XIV.3, trans. W. D. Ross, in The Basic Works of Aristotle. Random House ed. (New York, 1941), p. 919.

with its beginning, middle, and end, is firmly distinguished from story, in which the beginning and end are arbitrary.<sup>39</sup>

"The Unity of a Plot does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject,"<sup>40</sup> any more than it does in having one period of history as its subject, and for the same reason. Cooper suggests Marlowe's Doctor Faustus as an example of the attempt to achieve unity with the story of one man<sup>41</sup> which Aristotle calls "episodic" and "the worst" kind of simple plot.<sup>42</sup> Aristotle uses the same root word, but in another form, and without any derogatory connotation when he discusses the process by which the terse summary of action is developed into a playing tragedy.<sup>43</sup> House suggests the use of episodise because it is a "very workmanlike verb" that legitimately can be used in translating what Aristotle says about this process.<sup>44</sup>

Emphasis so far has been on Aristotle's first principle of tragedy, the organic unity which the plot should establish. But Aristotle says tragedy "is an imitation not only of a complete action, but also of incidents arousing pity and fear. Such incidents have the very greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another."<sup>45</sup> Within the organic unity of the tragedy and, in a sense, reinforcing it, a second principle

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<sup>39</sup>House, p. 44.

<sup>40</sup>Aristotle, p. 1463.

<sup>41</sup>Cooper, Aristotle On the Art of Poetry (New York, 1913), p. 34.

<sup>42</sup>Aristotle, p. 1464

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 1471-73.

<sup>44</sup>House, p. 54.

<sup>45</sup>Aristotle, pp. 1464-65.

determines the incidents; the principle of necessity and probability. This principle unites the complication and denouement;<sup>46</sup> it insures adequate preparation for a change in the hero's fortunes and a satisfying experience for the audience when the action unravels after the catastrophe.<sup>47</sup> The principle of necessity and probability is not the same as fate, which many people have tried to identify as the power operative in Greek tragedy. Cooper has this distinction in mind when he says: "There is, however, but one agency against which a Greek hero may not hope to contend--and that is the poet. Sophocles, not destiny, controls the action; having planned a tragic outcome, he makes Oedipus take the wrong course at every juncture. . . . An arbitrary fate is 'irrational,' and the sort of thing he would exclude from the action. But it is 'probable' that a tragic hero will talk of destiny in excusing his own blindness of heart."<sup>48</sup> It is this principle of necessity and probability on which Aristotle bases his statement that "There should be nothing improbable among the actual incidents,"<sup>49</sup> or, as Butcher translates the same phrase, "nothing irrational."<sup>50</sup>

House explains that "these criteria of probability and necessity derive their validity within the structure of the play from their validity in real life."<sup>51</sup> Although "the necessity operates within the poem, its necessariness

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<sup>46</sup>Aristotle, p. 1473.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 1470.

<sup>48</sup>Cooper, Poetics, Meaning and Influence, pp. 82-83.

<sup>49</sup>Aristotle, p. 1470.

<sup>50</sup>Aristotle, On the Art of Poetry, trans. S. H. Butcher (New York, 1948), p. 20.

<sup>51</sup>House, p. 60.

is independent of the poem."<sup>52</sup> This principle is the basis of Aristotle's realism, a realism that applies to characters as well as incidents: "whenever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing, it shall be the necessary or probable outcome of his character; and whenever this incident follows on that, it shall be either the necessary or the probable consequence of it."<sup>53</sup>

House connects this principle of necessity and probability with Aristotle's idea of convincingness, when he says, referring to poetry in general, that "a convincing impossibility is preferable to an unconvincing possibility."<sup>54</sup>

After insisting on the organic unity of the tragedy, and explaining that the incidents and characters in the play must be governed by the principle of necessity and probability, because such a cause and effect relationship is most likely to arouse pity and fear in the audience,<sup>55</sup> Aristotle considers the specific kinds of incidents that are most likely to arouse pity and fear in the audience. Obviously, such an effect will result from "suffering . . . an action of a destructive or painful nature, such as murders on the stage, tortures, woundings, and the like."<sup>56</sup> The closeness of the relationship between the perpetrator of the deed and the victim, e.g., within the family circle, increases its effectiveness.<sup>57</sup> Cooper makes the interesting observation that, for Aris-

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<sup>52</sup>House, p. 61.

<sup>53</sup>Aristotle, pp. 1469-70.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 1485-86.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 1465.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 1466.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 1468.

totle, this does not include "mental suffering" which is so common in modern plays.<sup>58</sup> Aristotle's omission of specific examples of this kind of suffering need not lead to the inference that he excludes it, but merely to the conclusion that the plays with which he was familiar were limited by the theatrical circumstances in which they were presented and had not developed this potentially powerful source of tragic pleasure.

The two other general types of incident, peripety and discovery, need more careful explanation. The presence of either or both of these is Aristotle's method of distinguishing a complex from a simple plot.<sup>59</sup> Naturally, he rates a plot that includes either or both of these "most powerful elements of attraction in Tragedy"<sup>60</sup> as superior to one that is simply a representation of the "change in the hero's fortune."<sup>61</sup> According to his second principle these incidents should "arise out of the structure of the Plot itself, so as to be the consequence, necessary or probable, of the antecedents."<sup>62</sup> There is no contradiction between this principle and their unexpectedness, since the principle applies to the way in which the audience perceives the incidents that occur on stage, and unexpectedness to the attitude of the characters in the play.<sup>63</sup> Surprise, which Lucas says is better left to melodrama and some kinds of comedy,<sup>64</sup> is not

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<sup>58</sup>Cooper, Poetics, Meaning and Influence, p. 46.

<sup>59</sup>Aristotle, p. 1465.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 1461.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 1465.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Lucas, p. 90.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

the same as the unexpected. A result may be completely unexpected by the participants in the action, yet perfectly in accord with the principle of necessity and probability as the audience sees the play, and in spite of, or perhaps, because of these conditions, still possess the maximum of suspense and tragic irony for the audience. Aristotle makes one more general statement about the selection of the incidents to be included in the plot, when he says that its issue must be single, not double. Though the weakness of audiences may prompt them to praise a story that has an opposite issue for the good and bad personages, they cannot derive the appropriate pleasure from it. The pleasure they do derive "belongs rather to Comedy, where the bitterest enemies in the piece (e.g., Oerestes and Aegisthus) walk off good friends at the end, with no slaying of anyone by any one."<sup>65</sup>

When the principle of necessity and probability operates within and reinforces the principle of organic unity, it implies a third principle, that the truth of a tragic drama is universal rather than particular.<sup>66</sup> Characters may have the names of real people, but it is the ordering of the plot and the execution of the incidents that should convince the audience that such things might have happened, just that way, not the fact that they did.<sup>67</sup> Since the poet's function is not to describe what did happen,<sup>68</sup> it is accidental that many of the

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<sup>65</sup> Aristotle, p. 1467

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 1464.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1463.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

best tragedies are based on fact, particularly the histories of a few houses.<sup>69</sup> These histories happen to contain incidents that are ideally suited to the tragic purpose, e.g., a deed of horror done within the family circle.<sup>70</sup> Lucas suggests another reason why these dynastic sagas provide such a rich source of tragic pleasure: the higher the estate of the hero, the greater his fall.<sup>71</sup> According to the principle that tragedy should present universal rather than singular truth, Aristotle says that the traditional stories must be kept as they are, but the poet will have ample opportunity to display his talent in devising the right way of treating them.<sup>72</sup>

Aristotle says nothing specifically about characterization in his definition of tragedy, and when he discusses the six parts of a tragedy, he says that poets "do not act in order to portray the Characters; they include the Characters for the sake of the action."<sup>73</sup> But such statements do not imply that characterization is unimportant. Aristotle emphasizes the principles of organic unity, necessity and probability, and universal truth and says that "Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery," because according to his metaphysics, "All human happiness or misery takes the form of action; the end for which we live is a certain kind of activity not a quality."<sup>74</sup> House clarifies this by saying that "In real life, quite

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<sup>69</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 1467-68.

<sup>71</sup>Lucas, p. 116.

<sup>72</sup>Aristotle, p. 1468.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 1461.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.



apart from drama, character is subordinate to action because it is a product of action."<sup>75</sup> Here the reference is clearly to character in the ethical sense, not as one of the *dramatis personae*. House says the ambiguity of the word character exists in Greek as it does in English,<sup>76</sup> but he sees no problem in what Aristotle says about character and plot if one remembers that, in his ethics, "character may be looked upon as the arbitrarily established meeting-point of two series of actions; the antecedent series which has gone to its formation, and the consequent series in which it will be actualised in future. Character in itself is not fully 'real' until it is 'in act' or 'in action'."<sup>77</sup> Now, when Aristotle says plot is more important than character, he means it is more important to have a pattern in the incidents of the play, that will give it organic unity, than it is to reveal the moral purpose of any member of the cast. When he says "one may string together a series of characteristic speeches of the utmost finish as regards Diction and Thought, and yet fail to produce the true tragic effect;"<sup>78</sup> he means that an audience will have only part of its desires satisfied by even the most superbly conceived and executed dialogue, and will leave the theatre with an unsatisfied craving for harmony and order.

Lucas agrees with this interpretation of Aristotle's theory but limits its application when he says that "the relative importance of character and plot varies with different dramatists and different national temperaments,"<sup>79</sup> and cites

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<sup>75</sup>House, p. 70.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>78</sup>Aristotle, p. 1461.

<sup>79</sup>Lucas, pp. 118-119.

Shakespeare as an example of a dramatist who makes character the chief source of entertainment. Arnold however, upholds the truth of the classical doctrine for all time, and claims that Shakespeare "knew well what constituted a poetical action," but added his own gift "of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression, eminent and unrivalled: so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him, and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet." Arnold goes on to cite imitators of Shakespeare's style who fail to reproduce his masterpieces of tragedy,<sup>80</sup> as evidence of the permanent validity of Aristotle's warning that a string of polished speeches would fail to produce the true tragic effect. It is not necessary in this thesis to establish whether or not Aristotle's hierarchy of plot and character is still valid, but it is necessary to understand how, and even why, he establishes it in the Poetics.

Important as plot is to Aristotle, he never denies that there must be agents to carry out the action which is the object of imitation in a tragedy. As House says, for Aristotle, "character and action were not opposed to each other, but inseparable."<sup>81</sup> Aristotle's tacit assumption that there would be characters in a tragedy, i.e., characters in the sense of *dramatis personae* or agents of action, appears in his almost casual reference to them when he says the ideal length of a tragedy should be such that it "allows of the hero passing by a series of probable or necessary stages from misfortune to happiness, or from happiness to misfortune,"<sup>82</sup> or again when he says a plot is simple "when the change

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<sup>80</sup>Matthew Arnold, "Preface to Poems, Edition of 1853," Criticism: the Major Texts, ed. Walter Jackson Bate (New York, 1952), p. 448.

<sup>81</sup>House, p. 68.

<sup>82</sup>Aristotle, p. 1463.

in the hero's fortunes takes place without Peripety or Discovery."<sup>83</sup> The delineation of these agents of action, "who must necessarily have their distinctive qualities both of character and thought, since it is from these that we ascribe certain qualities to their actions,"<sup>84</sup> provides the poet with an opportunity to display another, more easily acquired and less essential, but nevertheless, potent skill.<sup>85</sup>

Aristotle regards character as the second most important of the parts of a tragedy and he defines it as "that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents, i.e., the sort of thing they seek or avoid,"<sup>86</sup> and clearly distinguishes it from thought when he says "there is no room for Character in a speech on a purely indifferent subject."<sup>87</sup> Such speeches express thought, which he defines elsewhere as that which "is shown in all they say when proving a particular point, or it may be, enunciating some universal proposition."<sup>88</sup> Aristotle shows the relationship of character to the action of the plot when he says, "Character [in the sense of ethical nature as explained by House,] gives us qualities, but it is in our actions--what we do--that we are happy or the reverse."<sup>89</sup> Since the character, or moral bent, or habit of action, as the result of past actions, deter-

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<sup>83</sup>Aristotle, p. 1465.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 1460.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 1461.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 1462.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 1461.

mines future ones, character in this ethical sense is the cause, once removed, of the happiness or misery of the character or person represented by a name in the *dramatis personae*. An exposition of Aristotle's theory of characterization of any member of the cast, and in this thesis, that of the protagonist, presupposes this distinction between the two meanings of "character."

According to Aristotle, thought as well as character is an activity of the dramatic personage. House explains their relationship when he says, "As character is shown in the choice of ends (we can be said to 'choose' both the end and the means to it), so thought is the deliberation about means to the end."<sup>90</sup> Incidentally, Cooper notes that both elements may be present in the same passage, and need not necessarily be separated or distinguished.<sup>91</sup> He also says that moral bent and thought are the two natural causes of the particular deeds of men, and of their success or failure in life.<sup>92</sup>

Aristotle does not use the term tragic protagonist, nor does he differentiate between the hero and the other characters except when he refers to the change in the hero's fortune. What he says of characters in chapter XV may be assumed to apply to the protagonist as well as to the other two or three characters who would have appeared in a play with which he was familiar. He says there are four points to aim at in the characters. "Good" pertains primarily to what the character is in himself and "appropriate," "like the reality," and "consistent," to how he appears to the audience. Aristotle says, "First and foremost . . .

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<sup>90</sup>House, p. 75.

<sup>91</sup>Cooper, Aristotle on Poetry, pp. 26-27.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

they shall be good," as revealed by their moral purpose. To rule out the possibility that he is limiting the cast to personages of value, in the economic, political, or social scale, he adds that even a woman or a slave can be good in this way.<sup>93</sup> House explains that although this requirement might seem strange at first sight, it "is essential to Aristotle's whole theory because it is the foundation of that initial sympathy in spectator or reader without which the tragic emotions cannot be roused or the tragic pleasure ultimately conveyed."<sup>94</sup> Considering the example given by Aristotle, of a failure in this respect, i.e., Menelaus, Lucas says his real point here is that the characters should be as fine as the plot permits.<sup>95</sup> House also uses this example, but to show that Aristotle does not rule out interplay of character as between good and bad, when it is necessary and some use is made of it in the plot.<sup>96</sup>

But Aristotle defines the limitations of the tragic protagonist with greater precision. He rules out an utter villain as a hero, because the downfall of such a character would inspire neither pity nor fear, for "pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, fear by that of one like ourselves."<sup>97</sup> Aristotle also rules out a man who is preeminently virtuous and just, because his passage from happiness to misery "is not fear-inspiring or piteous, but simply odious."<sup>98</sup> Lucas tries to clarify Aristotle's understanding of "good" by contrasting the

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<sup>93</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

<sup>94</sup>House, p. 83.

<sup>95</sup>Lucas, p. 107.

<sup>96</sup>House, p. 84.

<sup>97</sup>Aristotle, p. 1467.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 1466.

Christian virtues of humility, meekness, and contempt of worldly things, with the pagan view that the supreme good is in "greatness of soul, strength of body, and all qualities that make a man formidable."<sup>99</sup> Thus, for Aristotle, the ideal tragic hero, if not the ideal man, is one "whose misfortune . . . is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g., Oedipus, Thyestes, and men of note of similar families."<sup>100</sup>

Aristotle has given his reason for this requirement of great reputation and prosperity in connection with the choice of stories to accomplish the tragic purpose<sup>101</sup> and it is independent of the requirement of moral goodness, which the hero must fulfill in average or better than average fashion.<sup>102</sup> House emphasizes that Aristotle's hamartia is not "a moral state; but a specific error which a man makes or commits."<sup>103</sup> He warns against the term tragic flaw, which has been used for Oedipus' hasty temper, Macbeth's ambition, and Othello's jealousy, but which are not hamartiai in Aristotle's sense.<sup>104</sup> Cooper says the Greek word hamartia, has the special connotation of "want of insight within the man, but is elastic enough to mean also the outward fault resulting from it."<sup>105</sup> House ex-

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<sup>99</sup>Lucas, p. 108

<sup>100</sup>Aristotle, p. 1467.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., pp. 1467-69.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 1467.

<sup>103</sup>House, p. 94.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Cooper, Aristotle on Poetry, pp. 40-41.

plains how a man's "want of insight" can result in a catastrophe that will motivate the audience to both pity and pardon the man. He cites references in the Nicomachean Ethics in which Aristotle discusses injuries done in ignorance and distinguishes voluntary, involuntary, and a third, special class of non-voluntary actions.<sup>106</sup> Hamartiai belong in this third class because they have characteristics of both voluntary, i.e., "they are derived from a wish for an end and proceed by the processes of deliberation," and involuntary, i.e., because "the ignorance of some particular fact or circumstance produces a result other than that which was expected."<sup>107</sup> He continues: "It is important to realize that the ignorance involved is not ignorance of the end, or a mistake in the kind of end to be aimed at; for that means a voluntary action and a bad one."

Both House<sup>108</sup> and Lucas<sup>109</sup> see a significant relationship between the hamartia of the protagonist and those two most powerful elements of attraction in tragedy, peripety and discovery. Peripety, as a change from one state of things to its opposite, in the necessary or probable sequence of events,<sup>110</sup> and discovery, as a change from ignorance to knowledge,<sup>111</sup> can occur in the life of any member of the cast. However, Lucas suggests that Aristotle would naturally have

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<sup>106</sup>Aristotle, Ethica Nicomachea, V.8 and III.1, trans. W. D. Ross, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, Random House ed. (New York, 1941), pp. 1015-16 and 964-967.

<sup>107</sup>House, p. 95.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

<sup>109</sup>Lucas, pp., 98-99.

<sup>110</sup>Aristotle, p. 1465.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

preferred the neatness and economy of combining the necessary frailty of the hero with peripety, as its cause, and the hero's subsequent enlightenment as a discovery.<sup>112</sup> Peripety traditionally refers to the hero's misfortune which is the opposite of his originally fortunate condition but it can also be used with reference to other incidents in which the actual result is the opposite of the one intended when the character acts. Although Aristotle's examples of discovery are recognitions of persons, Lucas prefers realisation to convey the meaning of the Greek anagnorisis, since the enlightenment or discovery may be on many other matters than the identity of a person.<sup>113</sup> Aristotle implies the ideal relationship of peripety and recognition<sup>114</sup> in which the protagonist recognizes himself as the person responsible for his misfortune.<sup>115</sup>

Lucas attributes the invalid assumption by some interpreters that hamartia should be equated with moral weakness to Aristotle's own confusion about the difference between ethical and aesthetic goods. He says that "For a race as abundantly intellectual as to produce the Socratic dogma, 'Virtue is Knowledge,' it was easy to obscure the difference between error and sin. . . . But the important thing here is to grasp that Aristotle's ideal form of a tragedy is simply this—one in which the destruction of hero or heroine is caused by some false step taken in blindness."<sup>116</sup> Lucas calls this the Tragedy of Error, which is a

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<sup>112</sup> Lucas, p. 99, note.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 95, note.

<sup>114</sup> Aristotle, p. 1465.

<sup>115</sup> Lucas, p. 95.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 98.



good descriptive name for the kind of tragedy Aristotle says is the best, because "it is convincing in its logic, neat in its form, and poignant in its irony."<sup>117</sup>

Thus, Aristotle's ideal tragic protagonist emerges as a person who is enjoying great reputation and prosperity, has a good moral purpose, is neither all good nor all bad, but if anything, rather better than his fellows, commits an error or miscalculates about how to achieve his purpose, suffers a misfortune that is the logical but not the anticipated or intended result of his action, and finally awakens from his state of ignorance to a full awareness of the ghastly truth. A poet may conceive of such a character and even feel the appropriate emotions, himself, but unless he projects the character so the audience also feels the tragic response, he does not produce a tragic drama.

The three other points to be aimed at in the characters are means of making the character convincing and appealing to the audience. Aristotle says that the characters should be appropriate.<sup>118</sup> The immediate question is, "Appropriate to what?" House denies that Aristotle means that the characters should merely resemble the traditional accounts of them,<sup>119</sup> and suggests that he means that they should be appropriate to their social or legal status.<sup>120</sup> Thus, according to the principle of necessity and probability, a king, who has been brought up as a king, would tend to act like a king, and a slave like a slave. The examples Aristotle gives are of failures in this respect, i.e., the "incongruous and un-

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<sup>117</sup>Lucas, p. 105.

<sup>118</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

<sup>119</sup>House, p. 87.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-90.

fitting" lamentation of Ulysses and "the (clever) speech of Melanippe,"<sup>121</sup> and these examples bear out this interpretation. Lucas suggests an additional reason for the stipulation when he says, "But if we want characters typical enough to seem intelligible, we want them untypical enough to seem individual."<sup>122</sup>

What he means is that the character should display qualities and perform actions that will enable the audience to recognize him as the king, queen, nurse, or messenger he purports to be, and also to show enough kinship with the humanity of real life so the audience can feel for Oedipus, Phaedra, her nurse, and the well-intentioned but surprised and disappointed messenger from Corinth.

Aristotle says the third point to be aimed at in characters "is to make them like the reality, which is not the same as their being good and appropriate."<sup>123</sup> When Butcher translates this point as "true to life,"<sup>124</sup> or Rostagni as "natural,"<sup>125</sup> they intensify the paradox between this point and what Aristotle says elsewhere about the personages of tragedy being better than men of the present day, to distinguish them from the personages of comedy, who are worse.<sup>126</sup> Clark includes Twining's explanation of this idea that the men in a tragedy should be "better" as that they should be "superior, i.e., in courage, strength, wisdom, prudence, etc., in any laudable, useful or admirable quality, whether

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<sup>121</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

<sup>122</sup>Lucas, p. 113.

<sup>123</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., Butcher, p. 19.

<sup>125</sup>House, quoted on p. 91.

<sup>126</sup>Aristotle, p. 1456.

such as we denominate moral or not."<sup>127</sup> Aristotle does not give either positive or negative examples of what he means by the phrase "like the reality," as he does for the other points. However, in chapter XV, he says poets "should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is."<sup>128</sup> He compares the activity of the poet creating characters in a play to that of a painter of portraits on two other occasions.<sup>129</sup>

Lucas says this dual aim of the author is necessary, since "in tragedy is embodied the eternal contradiction between man's weakness and his courage, his stupidity and his magnificence, his frailty and his strength."<sup>130</sup> Fyfe finds the "peculiar tragic thrill" primarily in this situation where the "heroic" character has something within himself--a venial error--"which obstinately and ironically combines with adverse circumstances, so that at last even his good qualities co-operate with both to fatal issues."<sup>131</sup> Cooper sees the principle of necessity and probability as the basis of Aristotle's requirement that characters be "true to life," or "like the reality," since "a certain kind of person must speak or act in a certain fashion as the necessary or probable outcome of his nature."<sup>132</sup> The final, decisive point in House's discussion of the Poetics

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<sup>127</sup>Barrett H. Clark, ed., European Theories of the Drama (New York, 1947), quoted in note 8, p. 7.

<sup>128</sup>Aristotle, p. 1470.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., pp. 1456 and 1483.

<sup>130</sup>Lucas, p. 55.

<sup>131</sup>Fyfe, p. xxv.

<sup>132</sup>Cooper, Aristotle on Poetry, p. 50.

is just this, that Aristotle "is trying to maintain a balance . . . in his theory of dramatic character. There are the extremes: (a) that characters should be 'like' ourselves; (b) that the poet imitates men as they ought to be, not as they are. The element of 'likeness' is necessary for sympathy; the element of 'unlikeness' is required so that their actions may have the greatness and coherence necessary to the unlikelike unity of a dramatic plot."<sup>133</sup>

Aristotle does not theorize about how the poet is to make his characters seem real to the audience, except for what is implicit in his emphasis on necessity and probability. His expression of a preference for iambic meter in the epic, because it represents the movement of real life,<sup>134</sup> may also apply to lines the characters speak in a drama. However, even this does not imply a theory on the technique for making characters realistic. Lucas makes some interesting comments on the tendencies since Aristotle's time, to strive for ever greater realism in spectacle and diction, which have a deadening effect on drama.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, it is more logical to assume that since Aristotle thinks characters should be grander than they are in life, they should also speak in a grander fashion.

The fourth and last point Aristotle advises the poet to aim at in characters "is to make them consistent and the same throughout."<sup>136</sup> Even if inconsistency happens to be a personal trait of a character, he should appear consistently inconsistent in the play. This requirement is obviously based on the

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<sup>133</sup>House, p. 125.

<sup>134</sup>Aristotle, pp. 1481-82.

<sup>135</sup>Lucas, pp. 123, 130-31, and 143.

<sup>136</sup>Aristotle, p. 1469.

principle of necessity and probability. Whether or not critics agree that Aristotle's example of a failure in this respect, i.e., Iphigenia, is valid, there is little doubt about the meaning of or necessity for consistency if a character is to convince the audience.

The preceding discussion reveals that Aristotle's principles for the characterization of the tragic protagonist are contained both implicitly in his theory of tragedy and explicitly in his comments on the hero and other characters. To facilitate comparison of Joanna Baillie's protagonists with Aristotle's principles for the ideal of the species, the following summary will provide an outline for the individual studies of chapter IV.

- I. The tragic protagonist should act within the organic unity of the plot.
- II. He should act according to the principle of necessity and probability.
- III. He should exemplify universal truth about human nature.
- IV. He should participate in an action that arouses the emotions of pity and fear in the audience. Therefore,
  - A. He should possess certain qualities as a person:
    1. He should be better, rather than worse, than his fellow men and have a good moral purpose.
    2. He should commit an error or miscalculate about the means to achieve his end, through ignorance of some material fact, i.e., he should have a hamartia.
    3. He should be enjoying great reputation and prosperity, from which position he should fall as a result of his hamartia.
    4. He should eventually learn the true state of affairs and realize his own instrumentality in his misfortune.

B. He should be presented to the audience so they will believe he is what the poet claims he is. (This is an exemplification of II.)

1. He should be appropriate to his social or legal status.
2. He should be sufficiently "like" the members of the audience to hold their sympathy even though he is more "heroic."
3. He should be consistent.

### CHAPTER III

#### JOANNA BAILLIE'S THEORIES OF TRAGEDY

Although the Aristotelian principles for the ideal tragic protagonist, summarized at the end of the preceding chapter, and the seven plays of Joanna Baillie are the main sources of material in this study, this chapter will be devoted to a brief consideration of Miss Baillie's theories of tragedy. Even though a study of the relationship between her theory and practice is beyond the scope of this thesis, the radical differences in both the ends and means of Aristotle and Miss Baillie suggest that this discussion is necessary for an understanding of the protagonists she creates in her "tragedies."

The "Introductory Discourse"<sup>1</sup> in the first volume of the plays on the passions, published anonymously in 1798, contains Joanna Baillie's explanation of her purpose in writing these plays, and critical comments on human nature and drama in general, from which her theory of tragedy can be synthesized. Prefatory remarks and notes in later volumes, all of which are included in the edition of complete works which she authorized in 1851, emphasize or clarify points made in the initial exposition but do not indicate any essential change in the theory itself. The explanation of her purpose in writing such a ser-

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<sup>1</sup> [Joanna Baillie,] A Series of Plays, In which it is attempted to delineate the stronger passions of the mind, each passion being the subject of a tragedy and a comedy, I (London, 1798), pp. 1-72.

ies<sup>2</sup> involves a discussion of the function of drama, which she bases on the natural gifts of man that enable him to profit from such presentations, and an exposition of her theories on the best techniques to be employed by writers of tragic dramas.

The author's aim in this series of plays and, incidentally, in the "Introductory Discourse" itself, is "to improve the mode of its [Drama's] instruction, and point to more useful lessons than it is generally employed to dispense."<sup>3</sup> This specific purpose is based on the assumption that "the Drama improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behaviour of others."<sup>4</sup> This "natural desire" is the "sympathetic interest we all take in beings like ourselves."<sup>5</sup> Although satisfying this interest by observation affords great pleasure to man, it was given to him by his Creator for another purpose, viz., "it is our best and most powerful instructor."<sup>6</sup> By making proper use of this instructor, men should learn "the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life" and be "prepared for distressing and difficult situations."<sup>7</sup> The great advantage of such vicarious experience is that men can escape painful personal encounters with reality, and

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<sup>2</sup>Baillie, The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie, complete in one volume, (London, 1851), p. 1. Subsequent references to explanatory material will be to this edition.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



yet acquire the knowledge necessary for successful living.<sup>8</sup>

To utilize this knowledge, men must also "reflect and reason upon what human nature holds out to their observation."<sup>9</sup> But though the disposition of sympathetic curiosity about their fellow men is universal, comparatively few men do reflect and reason. Those who do are somewhat like the gods who have been thought to look at human life as at a theatrical exhibition. This comparison suggests a method for inducing the generality of mankind to reflect and reason on what they observe. Moral writers of all kinds employ this method when they endeavor to lay open before them, i.e., the generality of mankind, "in a more enlarged and connected view than their individual observations are capable of supplying--the varieties of the human mind."<sup>10</sup> When moral writers remember that they must appeal to man's sympathetic curiosity about his fellow men, they are interesting and instructive, but if they forget or, for some other reason, fail to achieve this goal in their productions, "the fairy bowers of the poet, with all his gay images of delight, will be admired and forgotten; the important relations of the historian, and even the reasonings of the philosopher, will make a less permanent impression."<sup>11</sup>

Joanna Baillie assumes here that philosophers, historians, novelists, and poets are all moral writers, at least in the sense that their works are potential instruments of instruction for mankind. But the works of these writers

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<sup>8</sup> Baillie, Works, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

will fail to perform their function unless authors remember that "the transactions of men become interesting to us only as we are made acquainted with men themselves."<sup>12</sup> And if the works are to achieve the maximum effectiveness as instruments of moral instruction, the authors must further remember that "it is only for creatures like ourselves that we feel, and, therefore, only from creatures like ourselves that we receive the instruction of example."<sup>13</sup> From her observations of the general human interest in minute details of behavior, e.g., minute signs of a criminal's mental or emotional condition<sup>14</sup> as well, presumably, as her own responses, she concludes that it is the slight circumstances that best point out the dispositions and tempers of men, because it is in the "lesser circumstances" that men perceive the similarity between the man in the limelight and themselves.<sup>15</sup> In commenting on the practices of authors of tales and novels, she admits that false pictures of life may hold attention briefly because they are unnatural. However, it is "those works which most strongly characterize human nature in the middling and lower classes of society" which will ever be the most popular, because of their appeal to large numbers of people.<sup>16</sup>

These ideas form the basis of Miss Baillie's theory of drama in general and of tragedy in particular, and therefore, exert considerable influence on her practice as a dramatic writer. She believes that drama is the most potent of

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<sup>12</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

the various potential instruments of moral instruction because the human taste for drama is both universal and durable,<sup>17</sup> and the reactions of the whole audience exert a cumulative effect on its individual members.<sup>18</sup> The unique power of drama is due primarily to the presence of characters who "speak directly for themselves."<sup>19</sup> But in speaking for themselves, the characters deprive the dramatic writer of the opportunity shared by novelist and poet to describe and explain characters at length and in detail.<sup>20</sup> The dramatic writer can rely only on the actions and speeches of characters, which, unless skillfully and subtly rendered, are "great betrayers of the feigned and adopted."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, achievement of the maximum effect of drama depends largely on the ability of the dramatist to delineate character.

After this explanation of the ends and means of the dramatic writer, Joanna Baillie considers the special problems of the writer of tragedy. The particular tasks of tragedy are two. One is to show men "in those elevated situations, exposed to those great trials and engaged in those extraordinary transactions, in which few of us are called upon to act,"<sup>22</sup> but which can improve mankind by the "enlarged views which it gives to us of human nature, by the admiration of virtue and execration of vice which it excites."<sup>23</sup> The other, and even more impor-

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<sup>17</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

tant task of tragedy, is to "unveil to us the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will, from small beginnings, brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature, are borne down before them."<sup>24</sup> In performing this task, tragedy can improve men because, "Looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all the misery that ensues."<sup>25</sup>

Fortunately for all those seeking an audience for a tragic drama, the sympathetic curiosity of mankind is particularly excited by men "placed in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress."<sup>26</sup> Tragic compositions are addressed to the "sympathetic curiosity of our nature, exercised upon mankind in great and trying occasions, and under the influence of the stronger passions, when the grand, the generous, and the terrible attract our attention."<sup>27</sup> But it is not the sufferings of a fellow-creature in these situations that occupy the attention of the audience. It is the sight of a fellow-creature "struggling with . . . terrible apprehensions" and "bearing himself up under such circumstances,"<sup>28</sup> that interests and therefore can improve members of the audience.

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<sup>24</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

Miss Baillie derives her practical suggestions for writing tragedies from a critical examination of the failures of previous examples of the genre to achieve the maximum appeal to man's sympathetic curiosity, and effect the modification of his conduct. She observes that the "greater proportion, even of those who may be considered as respectable dramatic poets," have studied the great drama of the past, and in it have preferred "the embellishments of poetry to faithfully delineated nature. They have been more occupied in considering . . . the effects produced . . . than the varieties of human character which first furnished materials for these works, or the principles in the mind of man by means of which such effects were produced."<sup>29</sup> The imitation of the manner of classic tragedy has limited the "choice of situations and events to bring great characters into action" to "rebellions, conspiracies, contentions for empire, and rivalships in love."<sup>30</sup> The great and magnanimous and unshaken heroes who arise in these situations<sup>31</sup> fail because "to a being perfectly free from all human infirmity our sympathy refuses to extend."<sup>32</sup> The teaching effect is "proportionably feeble, as the hero is made to exceed in courage and fire what the standard of humanity will agree to."<sup>33</sup> If heroes are not represented "as real and natural characters, the lessons we are taught from their conduct will be no more to us, than those which we receive from the pages of the poet or the mor-

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<sup>29</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 9, note.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

alist."<sup>34</sup>

In trying to create characters with an intensely human appeal, however, the author should avoid two extremes. He should not put a particular, individual man, with all his eccentricities, into the cast because there can be no instruction from a character who does not correspond with man's general ideas of human nature.<sup>35</sup> Nor should the author resort to "those adventitious distinctions amongst men, of age, fortune, rank, profession, and country, [which] are so often brought forward in preference to the great original distinctions of nature," because they fill the scenes with impersonal "courtiers, lawyers, citizens, Frenchmen, etc., etc."<sup>36</sup> Although Miss Baillie consistently refers to "heroes," she does not intend to bar women from the ranks of tragic protagonists. In a note she states her belief that "no man . . . ever lived, who has behaved in a certain manner on a certain occasion, who has not had amongst women some corresponding spirit, who, on the like occasion, and every way similarly circumstanced, would have behaved in the like manner," albeit with "some degree of softening and refinement."<sup>37</sup>

But Miss Baillie does exclude two general "types" of characters which frequently appear in *dramatis personae*, viz., villains and pathetic lovers, because they lack power to appeal to, and consequently, do not affect mankind. She defends the first prohibition by stating that, "the perfectly wicked are as ill-

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<sup>34</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 9, note.

fitted for the purpose of warning, as the perfectly virtuous are for those of example,<sup>38</sup> because there is so little in the breast of a bad man to combat passion.<sup>39</sup> She admits that tender and pathetic lovers have some appeal as frail mortals and victims of misfortunes of the more familiar and domestic kind, but when they "sigh out their sorrows in one unvaried strain of studied pathos," they find our feelings incapable of answering their demand.<sup>40</sup> She sees another reason for excluding such lovers in the result of the frequency with which love is introduced as the grand business of drama. When the chief characters of so many plays must be interesting lovers, they inevitably acquire an insipid similarity to each other,<sup>41</sup> which decreases their intrinsic interest for the audience.

In such cases, when the chief characters tend to become dull, authors are apt to exhaust their efforts on second and inferior characters, so "we are called upon to be interested in the fortune of one man, while our chief attention is directed to the character of another, which produces a disunion of ideas in the mind, injurious to the general effect of the whole."<sup>42</sup> In citing one more fault of authors in their characterizations, Miss Baillie repeats the dominant theme of her dramatic theory. She regrets that "strong contrasts of character are too often attempted, instead of those harmonious shades of it, which nature beauti-

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<sup>38</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

fully varies, and which we so greatly delight in, whenever we clearly distinguish them."<sup>43</sup> She is obsessed with little things or minutia in which she sees the key to effective delineation of character.

Thus one problem confronting the author of a tragedy is to make the "great characters struggling with difficulties, and placed in situations of eminence and danger,"<sup>44</sup> so "real and natural" that their conduct and sentiments will enlarge and elevate man's moral outlook by analogy.<sup>45</sup> But the other and even more important task of tragedy confronts the author with a different problem. This second task of tragedy is to show "Those strong passions that, with small assistance from outward circumstances, work their way in the heart till they become tyrannical masters of it."<sup>46</sup> This example is one for man's direct application to himself, since the passions "carry on a similar operation in the breast of the monarch and the man of low degree," and by "opening to us the heart of man under the influence of those passions to which all are liable,"<sup>47</sup> man should learn the need and means of controlling his own passions.

Continuing the exposition of her own theories on writing tragedy, by citing examples of failures of previous writers, Miss Baillie notes that tracing those passions "in their rise and progress in the heart, seems but rarely to have been the object of any dramatist."<sup>48</sup> The general practice has been to present the

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<sup>43</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 13.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 10.



impassioned character "under those irresistible attacks of their power, which it is impossible to repel; whilst those gradual steps that lead him into this state, in some of which a stand might have been made against the foe, are left entirely in the shade."<sup>49</sup> Thus, the general practice has been to omit the potential source of direct edification.<sup>50</sup> Representation of but one stage of the course of "those great masters of the soul, ambition, hatred, love, and every passion that is permanent in its nature, and varied in progress," is imperfect representation of the passion itself<sup>51</sup> as well as being of no teaching value. Those small and familiar occurrences in which developing passions more strongly betray themselves, may seem inconsistent with the grave tone and serious effect tragedy should maintain,<sup>52</sup> but to strip the passions of "those less obtrusive, but not less discriminating traits which mark them in their actual operation," is a failure against truth.<sup>53</sup>

Miss Baillie warns against two other faults that frequently mar the presentation of a hero and the passion with which he is contending. Forgetting that "it is in contending with opposite passions and affections of the mind that we best discover their strength, not with events," authors have written tragedies in which "the passions themselves are almost obscured by the splendour and importance of the transactions to which they are attached."<sup>54</sup> Also, by indiscrimi-

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<sup>49</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

nate use of "bold and figurative language [which] belongs peculiarly to them," poets have deprived the passions of "the power of distinguishing themselves."<sup>55</sup> "This is an injury by no means compensated, but very greatly aggravated, by embellishing, in return, the speeches of passion with the ingenious conceits and complete similes of premeditated thought," which fly beyond nature into regions of bombast and nonsense.<sup>56</sup>

Miss Baillie's theory of tragedy can be summarized under the following seven points:

1. The writers of tragedy should remember that their purpose is to improve mankind.
2. The writers of tragedy must appeal to the sympathetic curiosity of men about creatures like themselves if their characters are to teach by example.
3. Minutiae best convince men of the similarity of characters to themselves.
4. Characters who must speak for themselves can be the most effective examples but are the hardest to make natural and convincing.
5. Mankind has a natural interest in seeing fellow-creatures bearing-up in tragic situations.
6. Heroes, and heroines as well, in these situations can teach by enlarging and elevating mankind's moral outlook, but only if they
  - a. are real and natural, rather than pre-eminent;
  - b. correspond with our general ideas of human nature, rather than appear as eccentric individuals;

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<sup>55</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., and note.

- c. show the great original distinctions of nature rather than adventitious distinctions;
  - d. have enough basic goodness to show a struggle with passion;
  - e. have individuality rather than mere family resemblance to chief characters of other plays;
  - f. retain our chief attention rather than share it with second and inferior characters.
7. Heroes struggling with passions to which all men are liable can provide examples for man's direct application to himself if
- a. the passion is exposed in the infant stages in which it can and should be resisted;
  - b. the passion is shown by those discriminating traits which mark it in its actual operation;
  - c. the passion shows its strength in contending with the opposite passions and affections of the mind and is not obscured by events;
  - d. the passion is not deprived of its power of making itself known by indiscriminate use of bold and figurative language or rendered ridiculous by being exposed in bombastic language.

Although Aristotle and Miss Baillie both rely on the same human inclination to regard a theatrical exhibition with attentive interest, they envision quite different ultimate uses for, and methods of, gaining this attention. Aristotle believes the purpose of tragedy is to please the audience by arousing in it the emotions of pity and fear, while Miss Baillie believes that tragedy should improve the representatives of mankind in the audience by warning them of the consequences of yielding to passion. Aristotle observes that men take a delight in,

and learn from imitations, but Miss Baillie refers to this phenomenon as the sympathetic curiosity men have about creatures like themselves. This is the beginning of a shift in emphasis from the man on the stage to the man in the audience. Aristotle expects the audience to feel pity and fear for the dramatic personage, when he experiences undeserved misfortune, discovers how he has been the cause of his own undoing, and suffers or inflicts suffering on others. However, Miss Baillie expects the members of the audience to apply the lesson of the fate of the dramatic personage to themselves.

Designation of these two theoretical positions as projective and subjective might not bear close scrutiny from the standpoint of psychology, but the terms serve to contrast the attitudes the two authors expect the audience to have toward the protagonist of a drama. According to the author of the Poetics, it is necessary that the audience be sympathetic toward the protagonist, and therefore, Aristotle suggests that he should have a good moral purpose. Because Miss Baillie wants the audience to realize the dire consequences of not resisting a passion in its infancy, it is either immaterial whether, or impossible that the protagonist have this personal qualification. She stipulates only that he should possess enough basic goodness to struggle with the passion. It is the passion itself on which she centers her attention, and she even cautions that it should not be obscured by events or the language in which it is revealed.

The hamartia, peripety, and discovery that loom so large in Aristotle's theory are entirely absent, per se, from Miss Baillie's theory. Only the peripety is even clearly implicit in her theory, i.e., yielding to passion is a diminution of human dignity, or a fall. Miss Baillie's emphasis on a real and natural, rather than a pre-eminent hero tends in the opposite direction from Aristotle's

requirements that the protagonist be both appropriate and true to life. Miss Baillie does not mention consistency as a desirable quality in the protagonist, nor does she advert to the principle of necessity and probability from which this quality is deducible, and on which Aristotle places so much stress. His emphasis on this principle is necessary because he is interested in the relationship between the cause and effect in the tragic action; Miss Baillie's lack of attention to the same principle is not surprising, since her interest is in a particular and preconceived result, i.e., ruination of the hero through his submission to passion.

With such radical differences in theory, it should not be surprising to find that Miss Baillie's practice of her theory in dramatic writing results in protagonists that are quite different from Aristotle's ideal protagonist. The following studies of the protagonists of seven representative Baillie "tragedies" will reveal these differences as well as some incidental similarities.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROTAGONISTS OF JOANNA BAILLIE'S "TRAGEDIES" IN THE LIGHT OF ARISTOTLE'S PRINCIPLES FOR TRAGIC PROTAGONISTS

Three of Aristotle's primary concerns are that the protagonist should act within the unity of the plot, with necessity and probability, and in such a way that he expresses a universal truth about human nature. Comparisons of Joanna Baillie's seven protagonists with these Aristotelian criteria require knowledge of the plot as a whole. Therefore, a summary of the plot of each play will precede the detailed study of particular protagonists in the light of the general principles. The personal qualities Aristotle ascribes to the ideal tragic protagonist, i.e., moral goodness, stature, and hamartia, the ability to experience peripety and discovery, and the display of appropriateness, likeness to the reality, and consistency, are revealed or not revealed when the protagonist participates in the incidents that occur as the plot action develops. Examination of Miss Baillie's protagonists on these points will follow the more general considerations. The order in which the plays are considered is not chronological, either by date of composition or publication, because neither method reveals any significant tendencies. The order that is employed is arbitrary, in general, but there are a few instances in which this order may help to show relationships between the protagonists or between them and the Aristotelian criteria.

## A. ROMIERO

Romiero: A Tragedy<sup>1</sup> is the story of a man whose jealousy of an innocent wife's love prompts him to suspect deception where there is none, and to assume that her necessarily secretive efforts to aid her father are motivated by infidelity to him. Blinded by jealous rage, he tries to stab her companion, but kills her instead. Realizing his mistake, he seeks to join her in death at the hand of the father for whose life she has given hers.

Act I begins on the sea coast near Don Romiero's castle. Sebastian is among the ship-wreck victims seeking refuge at the castle, and is over-joyed to find Zorada, the daughter he had never hoped to see again, who is Romiero's wife. Sebastian tells her the sad story of his betrayal to the king and the flight for his life. He is afraid that Romiero will not help him, since the king has forced him to swear to seek his father-in-law's life or be suspect himself. Maurice interrupts with news that Romiero has returned, and Zorada claims his assistance on the way to the castle to prevent him from following and recognizing Sebastian.

In Act II, Romiero's irritation at seeing Zorada and Maurice together passes quickly, in the joy of reunion with his wife, but revives when she shows greater concern for her father than for him. Romiero broods alone and then complains about Zorada to his friend, Gusman. The smiling answer that he is lucky if he only has to worry about her duteous love of her father reawakens jealousy of Maurice. Romiero vows to crush his jealous thoughts, since Zorada's companion, Beatrice, is the logical object of Maurice's interest. However, he questions Jerome, a servant who is secretly aiding Maurice's suit with Beatrice, and

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<sup>1</sup>First published in Dramas, I (London, 1836), 1-119.

the servant's evasive answers revive his latent jealousy.

At the beginning of Act III, Romero is irritated at Zorada's absence, broods in her room, and challenges her when she returns. Her assurance that she has done him no wrong only increases his doubts. During their rendezvous near Guzman's room in the castle, Maurice convinces Beatrice that they should elope before the next dawn, since he fears Romero is suspicious of them. When Romero seeks his friend, later that night, to complain about Zorada's diffidence, Guzman does not reassure him with much conviction, and eventually repeats what he has overheard of the recent conversation between Maurice and a woman whose voice he did not recognize. Guzman's half-hearted attempts to defend Zorada, against whom there is no proof, do not shake Romero's resolution to surprise the lovers as they flee at dawn.

In Act IV, when Maurice and the muffled form of a woman approach, Romero attacks the man. They fight until Beatrice intervenes and Romero recognizes her. Romero promises not to interfere in their romance, though he insists that they postpone their elopement, and hurries back to the castle to apologize to his wife. In Zorada's apartment, she and her nurse are preparing a basket of fruit for Sebastian, who is hiding in a ruined chapel nearby. They have just included a picture of Zorada, for which her father has asked, when Romero interrupts to display his passionate contrition. There is an affectionate but brief reunion before Romero discovers the picture in the basket of fruit. The nurse explains that it is for a sick old lady in the village, but an accidental reference to the recipient of the basket as he reawakens Romero's suspicions. Checking on a rumor that a woman's form has been seen at night near the old chapel, Romero forces Jerome to admit that Beatrice has never gone outside to meet



Maurice, and that he, too, has seen such a form. Romero confides his new reasons for suspecting Zorada to Guzman, who again makes a half-hearted attempt to defend her by pointing out the lack of evidence. When the two men try to get the truth out of the nurse, they misinterpret her evasions to mean that her own son is concealed somewhere in the vicinity and is the object of Zorada's solicitous attentions. Romero resolves to follow her on her next nocturnal excursion.

Romero and Guzman are waiting for Zorada to appear, in Act V, and Romero rushes toward the chapel when a servant informs him that she is already there. The nurse concludes arrangements with a ship-captain for Sebastian's escape while father and daughter are saying farewell in the chapel. The nurse warns them of Romero's approach and Sebastian leaves. Zorada answers her husband's accusations with a promise to explain all in a few hours, but he threatens to kill her. Hearing Romero's wild words, Sebastian returns and Zorada throws her veil over him to prevent his recognition. The jealous husband rushes at the pair and accidentally stabs Zorada. Realizing what he has done, Romero asks her forgiveness, which is readily given with a plea for Sebastian's life. After her death, Romero indulges in an agony of grief, then suddenly leaps at Sebastian, accuses him of causing the calamity, and challenges him to fight for his life. Both men fight as if more anxious to be killed than to kill, but Romero finally receives a wound. He begs Sebastian's pardon, says his recent harsh words were only to prove the fatal blow which releases him from life to join Zorada, and commends Sebastian's safety to Guzman, who is free of any oath to turn him in, dead or alive.

Romero acts in conformity with the first Aristotelian principle for the ideal tragic protagonist, i.e., within the organic unity of the plot. The first

act of Romiero is devoted to exposition of the situation in which the protagonist subsequently sees implications of his wife's infidelity. The last four acts show the progress of his passion until it culminates in the catastrophe. When Romiero appears in the second act, he shows the possessive attitude toward Zorada which leads him to misinterpret everything that happens to sustain and satisfy his jealousy. Romiero's discovery, in Act IV, that he has been wrong, permits brief relaxation of his suspicion, but he quickly resumes the habit. He remains under its influence until he commits the frenzied act that ends his wife's innocent life and his own false suspicion of her.

Romiero also conforms to the second Aristotelian principle for a tragic protagonist. There is little advance warning, by indirect characterization, of how he will act but, on his appearance in Act II, he begins to reveal his character as he impatiently waits for Zorada's return. This character is such that Romiero's later actions are necessary and probable. Before his personal appearance, Romiero is mentioned as the absent husband of the loved and esteemed Zorada, when a servant tells the ship-wrecked sailors he is "Kept at the king's high court, as it is said, but my opinion is---,"<sup>2</sup> This unfinished and uninformative statement arouses curiosity which is not satisfied by Maurice's report to Zorada that Romiero's joyful vassals are crowding to greet him on his return. Sebastian mentions the rumor, which Zorada refuses to believe, that the king has suspected Romiero, because of his family ties, and that he has sworn to seek the lives of Sebastian and his companions, to prove his own loyalty.

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<sup>2</sup>Joanna Baillie, Romiero: A Tragedy, in The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie, complete in one volume. (London, 1851), I.i.313. Subsequent references to this and other plays will be made parenthetically in the text, by act, scene, and page in this edition.

On the basis of evidence presented in the play, Romero's suspicions of Zorada would be unjustified and unwarranted if entertained by a normal, intelligent human being. However, Romero is a hyper-sensitive, ego-centric personality, and for him they are necessary conclusions. Immediately on his return from the king's court, he questions the servants on Zorada's whereabouts. He is annoyed because she is not in the castle, waiting to greet him, and jealously angry when she arrives, leaning on the arm of Maurice. When Zorada anxiously inquires about her father, Romero admits that he has taken the rumored oath, and petulantly complains that his wife is more concerned about her father than she is about him. Romero immediately connects Guzman's smiling comment that he is lucky if his only complaint is of Zorada's duteous love of Sebastian, with the presence of Maurice. The better impulse to assume that Maurice is interested in Beatrice dies quickly and he interprets Jerome's evasive answers to his questions as an attempt to protect Zorada, not her friend. Romero broods during his wife's absence after dinner and finds her assurance that she has done him no wrong suspiciously defensive. When he again complains to Guzman, he admits that he does not suspect Zorada of what a worldly judge would call infidelity, but says, "If I have lost her heart, I've suffered all." (III.iii.324) Ostensibly to prevent a greater shock, later, Guzman repeats what he has overheard between Maurice and "a woman." It is logical that a man in the habit of drawing irrational conclusions that coincide with his crotchets would assume that the woman must be Zorada and proceed to act violently against "her" supposed companion.

During the hiatus in jealousy that follows the discovery of his mistake, Romero's nature proves as passionate and abject in contrition as it is heedless and aggressive in condemnation. The discovery of the picture and the nurse's

confusion about the gender of the person for whom the basket is being prepared send another surge of jealousy over his spirit. He checks among the servants on the report that Zorada has been seen in the forest at night, and accepts the help of Guzman in cross-examining the nurse, but he needs no help to infer falsely that she refers to her own family when she mentions close kindred. Romero connects this inference with the picture, and, acting according to his own distorted logic, determines to catch the guilty pair. Not finding the man, he accuses and threatens Zorada, and when a man does appear, his fatal lunge is as inevitable as the fulfillment of his desire to join Zorada in death.

As causes of tragic pleasure, the murder of Zorada and the wounding of Romero are typical Aristotelian scenes of suffering. Romero's discovery that he has killed Zorada by mistake ranks high on Aristotle's list of the kind of discovery that has the desired effect. Here, also is the ideal closeness of relationship, i.e., perpetrator of the deed and victim, are husband and wife. These incidents occur with the necessity and probability that Aristotle believes will insure the optimum tragic effect.

The universal truth expressed by the character of Romero has limited application to the fortunately few members of the human race who are passionately devoted to having their egos nurtured by the exclusive attention of a spouse or other minion. Romero shows this excessively possessive tendency so early in the play that the lesson of his story is not applicable to the average member of the audience. However, given a man who bitterly resents his wife's concern for a father who is in grave danger, even the melodramatic catastrophe has the requisites of necessity and probability which make it a universal truth, albeit one of limited application.

Although he conforms to Aristotle's first three principles for a tragic protagonist, Romero's personal qualities are antithetic to those suggested by the author of the Poetics. By his lack of the first requisite, i.e., good moral purpose, Romero fails to gain the initial sympathy of the audience. His dominant motives are a desire to be the sole object of Zorada's attention and, paradoxically, a compulsion to prove her unfaithful. Neither qualifies as a good moral purpose. Except for the possession of a castle staffed with several servants, and the allegiance of some vassals there is no evidence of Romero's great prosperity or that he has great reputation. He spends some time at the king's court and has been specifically required to prove that his loyalty to the crown is stronger than it is to Zorada's father. But this incident does not establish Romero's importance, since the king's action may well have been motivated by his regard for Sebastian rather than Romero. There is no direct evidence in the play that the protagonist has any appealing or good qualities. Maurice's description of Romero's joyful reception at the castle and Zorada's testimonials of love for him are the only things that can soften the unfavorable impression he makes by himself. In Romero's actions and expressions of thought the audience sees a selfish, egotistical, self-appointed judge who knows neither mercy nor forbearance. An audience might pity a man with such a deep-rooted psychological problem, but it is improbable that most members of it would identify themselves with such a character. Romero's apologies and attempts to make amends after both assaults with a deadly weapon do little to improve his reception, since his contrition is as excessive as the jealousy that precedes and necessitates it. The one admirable act of his career, in the play, is to ask Guzman to preserve Sebastian's life and, ironically, this is but a few moments

after Sebastian has shown that life matters no more to him than it does to Romero, after he has lost Zorada.

The search for an Aristotelian hamartia is no more successful than the attempt to find goodness in Romero. His oath to the king necessitates Zorada's suspicious behavior and his own suspicions. But Romero is ignorant of no material fact of the situation when he takes the oath. He is ignorant only of an improbable, future situation, in which he might be called upon to keep his oath. According to Aristotle, the hamartia is not vice or depravity, but a specific error. Therefore, neither Romero's vicious suspicions nor his depraved jealousy can qualify as Aristotelian hamartia.

However, when Joanna Baillie announces that Romero is a tragedy on the passion of jealousy,<sup>3</sup> she indicates that she is interested in this moral state. She makes Romero's jealousy the direct cause of the catastrophe which is one form of Aristotelian peripety, i.e., a reversal. Romero intends to kill the man he believes to have supplanted himself in Zorada's affections. Instead, he kills the wife he loves "far beyond all earthly things." (V.iii.335) Since Romero's position at the beginning of the play is not clearly exalted, his misfortune at the end is lacking in the power of the Aristotelian ideal. His behavior is abnormal, even in his early appearances, and a fall from passion-ridden sanity to insane surrender to passion does not exemplify the Aristotelian concept of a fall. For such a character as Romero, the transition from life to death is release, not fall. But discovery that he has killed Zorada is still an Aristotelian reversal, and Romero even sees himself as the cause of it. In his

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<sup>3</sup>Baillie, Works, pp. 231 and 312.

last speech to Zorada, he says:

But deamons have been dealing with my soul,  
And I have been thy tyrant and destroyer,  
A wretch bereft of reason. (V.iii.335)

The uncertainty of Romero's social status also renders a judgment of his appropriateness difficult. At least he does nothing inappropriate to what is known of the social standard he should maintain. The questioning of servants and betrayal to them of his suspicions of Zorada is not inappropriate but a symptom of his malady. This malady makes Romero inappropriate to the Aristotelian ideal of human, reason-dominated behavior, but according to the plot, the protagonist must be a passion-dominated man. Romero is a rash, suspicious, brooding, self-pitying man. He also shows deplorably poor judgment in choosing Guzman as a confidant if he really wants reassurance of tottering faith in his wife. But these qualities are appropriate to the character necessitated by the action of the plot. Miss Baillie employs the soliloquy--mutter--pause--mutter--pause--technique to make her character seem natural. This realistic touch does not succeed in making a man of such violent passions seem ordinary or natural. Romero's consistency has the single-mindedness usually associated with fanaticism or insanity. His two periods of repentance are of the same intense quality as the passion that makes them necessary and with which they are actually consistent.

This consistent villain-hero who emerges from Romero differs greatly from the Aristotelian concept of an ideal tragic protagonist. It is true that he does fulfill the requirements of acting within the organic unity of the plot and according to the principle of necessity and probability. It is also true that such a man as Romero can express universal truth only about the segment of the human race of which he is typical and not about human nature in general. An examina-

tion of the ethical character of this dramatic personage, however, reveals the discrepancy between Aristotle's theory and Miss Baillie's practice. Romero does not have the good moral purpose or better than average nature that Aristotle deems necessary for gaining the sympathy of the audience. It is his moral failing that brings disaster, not an Aristotelian hamartia. Romero does recognize his responsibility in the few moments after the catastrophe, but the tragic pleasure due to reversal and its recognition can scarcely compensate for the lack of kindred feeling with such an appropriately malevolent and maladjusted specimen of humanity. Romero serves as a good example of the Aristotelian dictum that the fall of an utter villain arouses a human feeling, i.e., satisfaction that justice has been done, but not the pity and fear that result from the fall of a good protagonist who makes a mistake.

#### B. DE MONTFORT

In De Montfort: A Tragedy,<sup>4</sup> the protagonist's hatred for his childhood rival, Rezenvelt, increases with the passage of time. Rezenvelt continues to triumph in their chance encounters, and treats De Montfort's enmity lightly. When De Montfort hears a rumor that his sister and Rezenvelt are soon to be married, he is so enraged that he kills Rezenvelt. Within a few hours, De Montfort follows his victim in death.

In Act I, Manuel, who precedes his employer, De Montfort, to the inn, explains to the host, Jerome, why he continues to serve such an irascible master. For all his faults, this De Montfort is given to sudden bursts of natural goodness, and he has a noble sister who would grieve if her brother's servants left

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<sup>4</sup>First published in A Series of Plays: In which it is attempted to delineate the stronger passions of the mind, each passion being the subject of a tragedy and a comedy. (London, 1798), I, pp. 301-411.



him. De Montfort arrives and throws himself despondently in a chair. Count Freberg and his wife, old acquaintances, surprise him with a visit and invite him to meet an unnamed, but most accomplished, stranger the next day. At breakfast the following morning, a servant mentions having seen his master's countryman, Rezenvelt, in the neighborhood. De Montfort reacts violently, recollects himself, dismisses the servants, then gives vent to his hatred for Rezenvelt by stamping his feet and shouting insults at and about his absent enemy. Freberg arrives with the promised "stranger," who is Rezenvelt. De Montfort refuses to respond to the pleasantries of his guests, and when they leave, pleading another engagement, De Montfort resumes his rage.

As Freberg and his lady are waiting for their guests in Act II, De Montfort's sister, the Lady Jane, arrives unexpectedly. Freberg welcomes her enthusiastically and his wife, though less enthusiastic, invites her to join the party. Jane explains that she has followed her brother secretly, but agrees to appear in a veil. Lady Freberg shows resentment of her husband's lavish praise of Jane's good qualities and its implicit disparagement of her. De Montfort and Rezenvelt exchange some caustic remarks before the veiled Jane appears. Thinking he recognizes Jane's voice, De Montfort is about to lift her veil when Rezenvelt intervenes to prevent him. Jane reveals herself to avoid a scene, and brother and sister enjoy a tearful reunion. When they are alone, De Montfort describes the youthful rivalry in which Rezenvelt triumphed so consistently. When fortune smiled on Rezenvelt, De Montfort lost his one advantage, a greater store of worldly goods. Jane asks how he can hate a man who has spared his life, and tells how her brother, having challenged his enemy to the field, was disarmed by the adroit adversary who then returned his sword. De Montfort says this has only

increased his hatred. Jane vows she will not cease her pleadings until she has turned his soul.

Angered at the beginning of Act III, because of her husband's admiration for Jane, Lady Freberg devises a plan to reduce Jane's stature in Freberg's estimation, viz., circulating the story that Jane has not come to find her brother, but her lover, Rezenvelt. De Montfort, adamant to Jane's pleas that he conquer his aversion for Rezenvelt for love of heaven, finally promises, for love of her, even to beg Rezenvelt's pardon. Rezenvelt welcomes the reconciliation and De Montfort succeeds, for some days, in controlling any outward manifestation of his still-rankling hatred.

In Act IV, Conrad tells De Montfort of the rumor that Rezenvelt is soon to marry Jane. De Montfort reflects that his sister's recent actions can be interpreted to confirm the rumor. Seeing Rezenvelt walking in the garden with her, he is so enraged that he again draws his sword and attacks his enemy. Rezenvelt again disarms De Montfort, and promises to discuss the matter the next day. De Montfort's servant reports that Rezenvelt is planning to spend the night at a nearby convent, listening to the chanting of a requiem, and that he will go alone through a forest where murders have been done and things unearthly are now wont to stalk at night. De Montfort leaves hastily, staring steadfastly at the point of his dagger as he goes.

A monk arrives at the convent in Act V, with the story of a bloody corpse he has seen on the path to the convent, and another monk tells of having met a wild-looking man, whose horror-strained features imply that he is the murderer. A party of monks returns, shortly, having cornered De Montfort, who slumps in despair and refuses to answer questions. When more monks bring in the body of

the victim, De Montfort's violent reaction leaves no question of his guilt. Jane tries to console her brother by assuring him that even such a deed of blood may be forgiven a humble penitent. Two officers of the law put De Montfort in chains to secure him until they can return with reinforcements. A few hours later, the bodies of victim and murderer are placed side by side and Jane gazes fondly at her brother's body and says:

He died that death which best becomes a man,  
 Who is with keenest sense of conscious ill  
 And deep remorse assail'd, a wounded spirit.  
 A death that kills the noble and the brave,  
 And only them. He had no other wound. (V.vi.103)

She suggests that, as Rezenvelt's friend, Freberg should arrange his burial and asks the nuns if, within the cloister, she:

May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,  
 Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,  
 Had claim'd a record of as noble worth,  
 As e'er enriched the sculptur'd pedestal. (V.vi.104)

The main action of De Montfort shows the intensification of the protagonist's hatred for Rezenvelt, until it culminates in the brutal murder of the hated man and the spontaneous destruction of the hater. When the play begins, De Montfort has almost completely surrendered to the passion. He makes an attempt, under the influence of a kindred, but ultimately weaker, passionate love for Jane, to free himself from his hatred. However, the rumor that Jane will marry Rezenvelt unites the two forces that drive him, and he attacks Rezenvelt. The act of mercy in sparing De Montfort's life a second time is Rezenvelt's death warrant, and De Montfort's own death follows from obscure, internal causes. Throughout the play, De Montfort is too absorbed by his hatred to engage in any activity outside the unity of this action. De Montfort's insane singleness of purpose prevents him from violating Aristotle's principle that the protagonist should

act within the organic unit of plot.

Since De Montfort's hatred is already so far advanced when he first appears, the original causes of that hatred are antecedent to the action and need not be judged by Aristotle's standard of necessity and probability. There is abundant evidence that De Montfort is an abnormal character, and once this is established, his actions in the play are the necessary and probable reactions to causes, for such a man as he is. The host of the inn and De Montfort's servant remember the man they once knew as De Montfort, but that man never appears in the play. The man who does appear bears out Manuel's remark that "there is no living with him now." (I.i.76) Among his fondly remembered good qualities, e.g., quietness and liberality, there is one of which he still gives evidence, refusal to admit that he has made a mistake, for which he apparently tries to make amends by a subsequent burst of generosity. From Manuel's description of De Montfort's symptoms, Jerome concludes that he may be suffering from love, but Manuel vehemently argues against that hypothesis, on the ground that even in his calm moments, "that gloomy sternness in his eye . . . repels all sympathy." (I.i.77) With this preparation, De Montfort appears and throws his gaunt body, topped by its pale-cheeked and hollow-eyed head, into a chair and sits morosely. His bitter remarks and unfriendly manner discourage Count Freberg and his wife from prolonging their surprise visit.

After a night's rest, and amid the breakfast comforts provided by the loving service of Jerome, De Montfort begins the day with a vicious discourse on the serpent<sup>s</sup> that do not slide along in the grass but assume the shape of men. The unwitting servant who mentions having seen his master's countryman, Rezenvelt, near the inn, witnesses his master's perturbation when he drops his coffee

cup, screams that it cannot be true, pounds the table with clenched fists, and stamps his feet. Recollecting himself, De Montfort sends the servants away, so he can express himself without restraint. This fit of rage has not subsided when Freberg arrives to announce that they will be joined shortly by De Montfort's "old friend," Rezenvelt. Freberg is perplexed by De Montfort's displeasure because Rezenvelt's liberal praise of him has fostered the impression that they are friends. Despite Rezenvelt's open friendliness and charm, De Montfort succeeds in making the interview unpleasant and brief. He tosses his arms distractedly and promises "determin'd deadly hate" to the "Malignant villain." (I.ii.81)

For such a man as De Montfort to agree to effect a reconciliation with his enemy, there must be another passion of intensity at least comparable to that of his hatred. He gives evidence of the other passion when he rushes tearfully into the arms of his sister at the Freberg's party and confides to her the enormity of his hatred and its real and fancied causes. The most significant cause is the result of the first duel, which is far harder to bear than death would have been. But the love for Jane is powerful enough to motivate De Montfort to attempt an outward reconciliation. If the sight of Jane and his enemy walking together in the garden is enough to unleash his fury in cursing Rezenvelt and manhandling the nearest servant, it is probable that the greater cause of the rumor linking their names will precipitate him into a murderous rage. When Rezenvelt shows his superiority by disarming De Montfort in a second duel, it is necessary that De Montfort seek what means he can to achieve his vengeance. For such a character as De Montfort demonstrates himself to be, his subsequent actions conform to the Aristotelian principle of necessity and probability.

However, the main action in the play depends on three coincidences which do

not fulfill this condition in themselves. The arrival of the two enemies, almost simultaneously, is unexplained, but is actually antecedent to the action. The arrival of Conrad with the fateful rumor is implicitly linked with Lady Freberg's plan to discredit Jane in her husband's eyes, an incident which the author rather obviously includes to explain the existence of the rumor. But it is the idea itself that De Montfort regards as so horrible; a question of its credibility or existence, per se, does not jeopardize the necessity and probability of De Montfort's reaction to Conrad's information. The third coincidence is the report of Rezenvelt's itinerary on the fatal night. De Montfort is already resolved to "do a deed of blood!" (IV.ii.94) and even if this opportunity did not so conveniently present itself, his emotional condition is such that he would find another. The information about Rezenvelt's movements is not skillfully introduced, but that does not constitute a violation of the principle of necessity and probability, in its application to the protagonist.

There is abundant suffering for both audience and protagonist in De Montfort's perpetually enraged condition. Rezenvelt's murder occurs off-stage, but loses little of its horror in its description by those who hear or see evidence of the act. Although neither fall nor discovery is typically Aristotelian, a reversal of some dramatic power occurs when De Montfort recognizes Rezenvelt as the accomplished stranger about whom Freberg is so enthusiastic. De Montfort also experiences a reversal when he is resolved to kill Rezenvelt and finds himself ignominiously disarmed a second time. These incidents all derive their necessity from the power of De Montfort's passion, but are events of minor importance in the action and do not adequately substitute for the more significant type of incident which Aristotle has in mind when he says these are the most

powerful means of arousing the tragic emotions.

Such a protagonist as De Montfort is obviously not a normal or average man. Clinical diagnosis of his psychosis is unnecessary to show that he can only partially fulfill the third Aristotelian principle for representing a tragic protagonist. As an abnormal individual, his ability to express a universal truth about human nature is restricted to the particular group of men with whom he shares his moral or mental aberration.

The action of De Montfort will arouse some emotion in the audience, but the personal qualities of the protagonist are not those which, according to Aristotle, will produce the emotions of pity and fear. De Montfort's madness decreases his culpability for the crime, but it also prevents him from gaining the initial sympathy of the audience. His prevailing moral purposes, i.e., finding some means of expressing his hatred for Rezenvelt, is not good. Love for Jane is also involved in his motivation, but cannot be established as a good moral purpose. It only temporarily halts the progress of the main action, during the period of reconciliation, or actually intensifies his hatred, when he envisions Jane married to the object of his loathing. According to the testimony of Jerome, Manuel, and Jane, De Montfort was once a noble specimen of humanity, but there is no direct evidence in the play to support their statements. His generosity and the lavish praise of Jerome and Manuel do not prove this, but suggest rather, that he feels guilty for having previously refused to admit an error. According to Aristotle, a protagonist as passion-dominated and irrational as De Montfort is, throughout the play, cannot elicit the sympathy of the audience as a good man can. Since De Montfort's actions are almost exclusively performed when his passions have usurped the position his reason should hold, they are immoral actions,

and cannot qualify as the Aristotelian hamartia. He is ignorant of the falsity of the rumor about Jane and Resenvelt, but the homicide he commits as a result of it disqualifies his erroneous assumption as a hamartia.

Although De Montfort's condition does change during the course of the action, he does not experience a typically Aristotelian peripety. There is little specific information in the play about the position he occupies in society. As a marquis, he belongs to the petty nobility, but apparently has no great reputation. Whatever he may once have been, in the play itself, he is tolerated by his acquaintances and servants, rather than respected, so his fall is not the loss of reputation. He appears to be enjoying considerable material prosperity, but from his first appearance, it is obvious that he is a spiritual pauper, with no resources of his own and no capacity for making use of the spiritual wealth Jane would so willingly share with him. For such a tormented soul, death, preceded by repentance, should be a most blessed relief, rather than a fall. The only possible fall is through the commission of the crime, which marks his descent from maniac to murderer. This vicious crime does not alter Jane's sisterly love, but she is obviously prejudiced. Lest there be any doubt of her bias, the author includes a note to explain her eulogy as merely an expression of personal opinion, not the conclusion the reader should draw from the play. This explanation invalidates what evidence there is of anything resembling a discovery or realization in De Montfort's last hours. Ostensibly, the scene in which he kneels with Jane implies repentance, but he says nothing to indicate that he can see himself in the wrong as a murderer any more than he can when he finds he has misjudged a servant in a minor matter. Although Jane attributes his death to remorse, it could also be due to emotional exhaustion, or inability to face the



future as a convicted murderer.

It is as a character who can convince the audience he is what his author claims he is that De Montfort shines forth as one of Joanna Baillie's greatest creations. Utter villain though he is, he is convincing. His behavior, of course, is not appropriate to his social status, since, as a member of the petty nobility, he should behave as a gentleman rather than as a madman. Any of his abnormal actions are inappropriate to the social status exemplified by his peers, Freberg and Rezenvelt. But whatever his background and early training, he has subsequently trained himself to respond with hatred to the very name of Rezenvelt, and his actions are appropriate to a self-imposed status which is necessitated by the plot.

Scenes in which De Montfort drinks coffee or reminisces with Jerome about his wife, rends his cloak in agitation, or stares steadfastly at the point of his dagger, are examples of the minute detail Joanna Baillie believes to be the most effective technique for making characters seem like the people in the audience or like the reality. Incidents like the first two are effective in achieving verisimilitude, but the violent nature of the last two remove them beyond the sphere of the natural or normal behavior patterns that are conducive to audience identification with the protagonist. Therefore, De Montfort's behavior is in only partial conformity with the Aristotelian ideal on this point.

De Montfort is nothing if he is not consistent. As the prototype of the villain-hero, he never deviates from the pattern of passionate conduct he establishes at his first appearance. The brief reconciliation with Rezenvelt is as passionate in motivation as the murder. The passions are different but the principle of surrender to passion is the same.

The protagonist of De Montfort acts within the unity of the plot, he does not violate the principle of necessity and probability in his actions, and he expresses a universal truth of at least limited application to human nature. However, the peculiar moral weakness he possesses renders him incapable of gaining the sympathy of the audience, of revealing the ideal relationship of hamartia, peripety, and discovery, or even of providing a good example of any one of these. The kind of character he is reduces the degree to which he can be either appropriate or like the reality, although he displays remarkable consistency as an un-Aristotelian protagonist, i.e., a villain hero.

#### C. HENRIQUEZ

The protagonist of Henriques: A Tragedy<sup>5</sup> is blessed with a wife who loves him, a great friend who is closer than a brother, and a sovereign who appreciates and honors him for his service to the country. Circumstantial evidence seems to confirm the accusation of an anonymous letter that the friend has stolen the wife's love and, in the first flush of his jealous rage, Henriquez kills his friend. When he discovers the innocence of both friend and wife, he is overwhelmed by remorse and insists on offering his own life in reparation, despite the pleas of wife, king, and friends that he accept clemency.

In Act I, Diego, a faithful old servant of the Altavera family, is afraid a direct approach will arouse his master's anger, so he writes an unsigned letter to Don Henriquez, accusing his wife, Leonora, of infidelity with his best friend, Don Juan. Antonio and Mencia discuss their mutual love which is doomed by Mencia's consent to marry another man. She has finally succumbed to the urging of her sister, Leonora, who, having realized her own ambition to marry Henriquez,

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<sup>5</sup>First published in Dramas, I, 252-370.

wants Mencía to marry a more important person than Antonio. Henriquez finds Diego's letter and scoffs at the "foolish scroll." (I.i.362) Inside Henriquez's castle, Inez reminds another servant, Blas, that Leonora will be displeased if her husband learns the identity of the guest for whom they are preparing a room. Blas works and sings until Henriquez appears to join him in a chorus and ask if women really do deceive their husbands as the lady in the song does. Blas arouses Henriquez's curiosity by his efforts to conceal the name of the guest, finally betrays that Don Juan "is wont to sleep" there, (I.ii.363) and obeys his master's command to summon Leonora. Henriquez notices a chest, his first gift to his wife, in which he finds a letter from Don Juan to a lady. The writer expresses appreciation for the lady's love, even though he realizes it has not always been his. He also promises to appear at the feast that night, as a masquer, unknown to Henriquez, "for the reason suggested to me," (I.ii.364) and concludes that he will enter by the private door to the grove, at nightfall. Henriquez mutters, "Night falls on some who never see the morn," (Ibid) and retreats to his room.

In Act II, Henriquez returns to his room with the bloody sword he has just used to kill Don Juan, a "needful act of righteous retribution." (II.i.365) Leonora, Mencía, and Carlos, a noble soldier attached to Henriquez, are waiting for him to appear at the feast when the king arrives for a surprise visit. He has a warm greeting for his favorite general, Henriquez, and gives him a ring as a token of gratitude for his service to the country and as a pledge that he will grant whatever Henriquez may ask when he returns the ring. Blas brings news that a murdered body, found in the grove, has been identified as Don Juan. Another servant reports that the murderer has been identified as the youth who has been

seen in the neighborhood for several days, and Mencia realizes that Antonio will soon be the object of pursuit. Henriquez retreats to his room and refuses to see anyone until Don Juan's secretary, Balthazar, arrives with his master's will, which makes Henriquez the sole heir. Balthazar casually mentions that there is another document, a marriage contract between Don Juan and Mencia, which shocks Henriquez. When he hears the poignant description of Don Juan's intention to surprise him on the fatal night, by asking a brother's blessing, he falls back into his chair with a deep groan, and says he is in the "blackest gulf of hell." (II.v.370)

In Act III, when Henriquez visits Don Juan's grave at night, Carlos interrupts his indulgence of "frantic grief" (III.iii.373) to report that the murderer has been caught. Henriquez springs to defend himself, and Carlos pretends not to notice his action as they go to question Antonio.

Believing him guilty, Mencia goes to Antonio's prison in Act IV, to help him escape. He assures her he is innocent and prefers to trust his deliverance to heaven. Henriquez also offers to help him escape, but the young man refuses to dishonor his family by flight. After consoling Antonio, the priest answers Henriquez's summons, but confession does not dispel the penitent's grief and remorse. Henriquez retreats to his room in an agony of despair but emerges a few hours later to order Carlos, Balthazar, and the fettered Antonio to accompany him to the king's court.

In Act V, the king disposes of three cases with little interest, patience, or sympathy, then welcomes Henriquez and his party. Henriquez returns the king's ring in exchange for an oath, on his sword, that he will refuse royal clemency to the criminal soon to be proven guilty of the murder of Don Juan. Antonio is

led forward, and Henriquez commands that his chains be unfastened. The king asks for the promised criminal; Henriquez kneels and says, "My royal master, he is at your feet." (V.i.379) Henriquez refuses the king's entreaty to delay the trial and execution, because:

My soul demands this sacrifice--pangs for it;  
As that which can alone restore to it  
The grace of heav'n and the respect of men. (V.i.380)

The king assures Henriquez that, living or dead, he will be honored. Antonio regrets that he did not run away, but Henriquez thanks him for having remained and thus prevented him from shrinking aside from duty, which he might have done if confession had not been necessary to save an innocent man. Leonora begs the king to pardon Henriquez, but the king says that only Henriquez can release him from the oath. Henriquez cheerfully faces execution and answers Antonio's passionate expression of admiration by admonishing the young man to learn from his example that one should not make rash judgments. Henriquez says an affectionate farewell to Leonora, who shrieks, falls, and is carried out. Henriquez claims a last, kind, but painful service from Carlos and the priest, and leads the procession toward the door of the execution chamber.

According to the author, Henriquez is the tragedy of a man dominated by the passion of remorse.<sup>6</sup> If this statement is accepted, the main action begins in Act II scene v, when Henriquez, realizing that he has made a mistake, begins to be sorry that he killed Don Juan, and ends when he insists on paying the penalty for his crime. On this basis, all of Act I and scenes i to iv of Act II are antecedent to the organic unit of plot. As the play stands, however, it could have organic unity as the story of a man whose unfounded jealousy motivates him

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<sup>6</sup>Baillie, Works, pp. 231 and 312.

to commit a murder that he regrets as soon as he learns the truth. The last three acts are then a long, drawn-out resolution of an action that is actually completed when Balthazar's information shows Henriquez how mistaken he was in suspecting Don Juan. Either of these episodes in the life of Don Henriquez constitutes the single action of a classic tragedy. The unifying factor in Miss Baillie's play is one man, which according to Aristotle, does not produce the organic unity necessary for a good tragedy.

According to Aristotle's second principle, the actions of the protagonist and those of other characters, to which he must react, should be the necessary and probable result of preceding events. In the first episode, the decision of Henriquez to kill Don Juan must have adequate motivation. But the circumstantial and suggestive evidence against Don Juan and Leonora in the first act includes only Diego's anonymous letter, Blas's song, confusion, and revelations, and Don Juan's letter and sonnets in Leonora's chest. The discoveries in the castle are made and become significant to Henriquez, only because they confirm the accusation in Diego's letter. But when Henriquez reads the letter, his immediate reaction is to pity the self-styled "unknown friend" who warns that Don Juan "has played thee false in thine absence, and destroyed thy wife's virtue and thine own honour."(I.i.362) He scoffs at the "foolish scroll" and says "it shall serve to light my evening lamp; / God mend the wretch who wrote it."(Ibid.) This overt reaction to the letter does not prepare for his hyper-suspicious attitude in the next scene, and there is less preparation or even post facto explanation of why Diego wrote his letter. He gives his reasons as a desire to save the honor of the Altaveras and fear that Henriquez will be suspicious and angry if such information is presented in person by one whose opposition to his marriage to Leonora

is as well known as Diego's. This is a superficially satisfying explanation of the existence of the letter, but affords no evidence of the truth of its contents, nor is there any subsequent indication that Diego has good reason for his suspicions. His antagonism toward Leonora is traced to resentment of her unwarranted pride, but that does not constitute valid evidence against her virtue. Thus, the initial cause of Henriquez's suspicion lacks necessity and probability.

With the letter in his pocket, Henriquez hears Blas singing a ballad whose stanzas describe the various disguises a lady devises to smuggle her lover out of the castle when her husband unexpectedly appears. The situations in song and letter are coincidentally similar, but that in which obvious preparations are being made for the entertainment of a guest is certainly not. Blas's attempt to conceal the identity of the expected visitor has been prepared for by Inez's warning that Leonora will be displeased if Henriquez finds out, but Blas's surprise when Henriquez still seems calm after he has heard that Don Juan "is wont to sleep" in this room, is not explained. In short, from anything revealed in the play about Don Juan's visits to the Altavera castle, the suspicions of the servants are not a necessary or probable result of the events any more than Henriquez's inquisitorial manner in dealing with Blas is prepared for by his scoffing reception of the letter at the end of the previous scene. The presence of Don Juan's letter and Leonora's chest in the room he occupies is unexplained. However, the phrasing of this letter is a masterpiece of dual application, both to the Don Juan-Mencia-Antonio situation, which exists, and to the hypothetical Don Juan-Leonora-Henriquez situation to which Henriquez assumes it refers. Such a letter in his friend's familiar hand might prompt disturbing inferences, but even when the author surrounds it with an artificially induced atmosphere of

suspicion, it is an insufficient cause to make Henriquez's decision to kill his "second self" a necessary or even probable one.

In their desire to surprise Henriquez with the news of his forthcoming marriage to Mencia, Don Juan and Leonora share responsibility for the compromising position in which they appear. Complete exposition of this innocent plan comes so late that the audience shares Henriquez's surprise when Balthazar reads the will and marriage contract. Balthazar's fortuitous arrival with these documents is unexplained, but the information he brings is, itself, the necessary and probable result of Don Juan's attitude toward Henriquez. The part Mencia reluctantly plays in the surprise prepared for Henriquez, and her relationship to Antonio, add to the credibility of the initial situation. Mencia loves Antonio, but has acceded to her sister's ambitious design for her marriage to a more nobly born man, i.e., Don Juan. Although complete exposition of this situation follows Henriquez's discovery of Don Juan's letter, it adequately, if belatedly, explains why he wrote such a letter.

The second episode, in which Henriquez's remorse compels him to offer his life as the only adequate expiation for his sin, is consistent with the principle of necessity and probability. If Henriquez can kill his life-long friend, in the erroneous belief that he is performing an act of righteous retribution, it is eminently necessary and probable that he will be extravagantly sorry when he realizes what an injustice he has actually done. As he broods on the act, and his love for the lost Don Juan revives, his remorse increases. In addition to this personal involvement, he sees the innocent Antonio, caught in a web of circumstantial evidence, ironically far stronger than that on which he has convicted and executed his friend. Leonora's faithfulness is no consolation, but only a



further reproach to the husband who once doubted her. Antonio's simple faith in heaven's protection of his innocence and his steadfast refusal to flee or believe Henriquez guilty, are the final, compelling facts that make Henriquez's decision to confess inevitable. The elaborate means he uses to insure his execution, and incidentally, although Miss Baillie makes nothing of this point, his escape from the mental torture of his remorse, are proved most necessary by the king's attitude toward him.

The mental torture of Henriquez is both necessary, in view of his character and his relationship to the victim, and significant enough in the play to rank as a mental analogue of the physical suffering Aristotle advocates as a means of arousing pity and fear. The only physical suffering mentioned in the play is the off-stage murder of Don Juan, but the entrance of Henriquez with his bloody sword is an effective means of informing the audience of the painful incident. Henriquez's discovery that his intention to execute justice is virtual fratricide of the innocent Don Juan is a momentous enough incident to rank with those Aristotle cites, but the evil motivation decreases its ultimate tragic power. This evil motivation is lacking in necessity since the character previously given to Henriquez does not prepare for such an action.

The attitude of the king toward Henriquez makes the logical interpretation of the play one that is contrary to any absolute standard of morality. The king shows little patience or mercy in the cases he hears before Henriquez arrives. His strong desire to pardon his favorite general arises from personal regard for the man and that man's service to the country, which apparently constitute, for the king, a valid reason for ignoring the objectively immoral action that Henriquez has committed. The author makes Henriquez appear far more wrong when he

refuses clemency and insists on being executed, than when he plunges his sword into the innocent and unsuspecting Don Juan. Even the farewell advice to Antonio, about controlling a passionate nature, does little to counteract the impression that Henriquez is performing a noble action in seeking the deserved fate of a criminal. Most murderers are not so willing to pay for their crimes, so the story of such an exceptional case is not universal truth. Henriquez's parting advice to Antonio, that allowing passions to provoke one to make rash judgments, and to act on them, can only lead to remorse, suggests that this is the moral lesson of the play and what the author intends as its universal truth. However, it is difficult to imagine that Antonio will learn from the bad example of a man he obviously regards as a hero, and to whom he owes his life and future. It is not probable that the audience will perceive this as a universal truth in the story of a hero-villain who resembles the Elizabethan type but is the antithesis of the Aristotelian type.

At the beginning of the play, Henriquez enjoys great reputation and prosperity as a renowned general and favorite of the king. His realization that he should pay for his crime makes him better than many murderers, but the murder he commits is a morally bad action, and by it, he fails to fulfill the Aristotelian requirement that the protagonist be better than the average man and have a good moral purpose. Whatever the fancied provocation, his presumption of the right to administer justice in killing Don Juan is a bad moral purpose. In the second episode, his moral purpose is good, i.e., making reparation for his crime, but the first episode is the one in which the sympathy of the audience should be gained. As a morally bad act, the murder of Don Juan cannot be the hamartia of the protagonist, according to Aristotle, even though it is an act committed in

ignorance of the true state of affairs. Since the author intends to write a tragedy of remorse, it is logical to look for the hamartia in the second episode, but Henriquez makes only one decision in this episode, i.e., to be executed for his crime. He makes this decision with full knowledge and acceptance of the ultimate result, and although the curtain falls before the axe, the obvious inference is that Henriquez achieves exactly the end he desires and expects. Henriquez, therefore, has no Aristotelian hamartia, and his passage from an honored living general to an honored dead general is not an Aristotelian peripety.

Henriquez's discovery that his suspicions of Don Juan and Leonora are unfounded is, perhaps, the most powerfully dramatic scene in all Miss Baillie's plays. The discoveries of the king, Antonio, Carlos, and Balthazar that Henriquez is the murderer, are less so, because for all their veneration of him, their relationship is not so close as that of Henriquez and Don Juan. Diego's realization that he was wrong about Don Juan and Leonora, and that he shares responsibility for the murder is not developed and the circumstances of his death are an unnecessary attempt to tie all the threads of the story, when the fate of Henriquez is the only important question. Henriquez expresses another realization of the true state of affairs, in his farewell to Leonora, when he says she has been his torment and his bliss, "But O! far more my bliss!" (V.v.384)

Henriquez does not belie his reputation as a great general when he manoeuvres the king into an impotent position, but his complete surrender to the emotion of the moment, whether jealousy or remorse, is contradictory to the discipline he presumably is able to exercise in leading armies to victory. His passionate nature, to which Diego and Mencia refer, might have been controlled for military purposes but allowed free reign in his personal life. In such a person

the excess of grief in which he indulges does not make him seem like the average man, but rather, like the average, passionate man. His defensive reaction to fancied accusations by Carlos and Antonio is the typically human reaction of a guilty man. The consistency of Henriquez in minor matters cannot compensate for the glaring inconsistency of a man who forgets a life-time of love in the hour of jealousy, or whose cherished faith in two people is shattered by two pieces of paper. These pieces of paper may well be as strong external evidence as Desdemona's handkerchief is in the eyes of Othello, but Henriquez's suspicions arise spontaneously in his own mind, and without an Iago to foster them, they are neither the necessary result of evidence nor consistent with his character.

In Henriquez, Miss Baillie sacrifices organic unity and violates the principle of necessity and probability in an ineffectual attempt to show how and why Henriquez places himself in a position where remorse can overwhelm his instinct for survival. By trying to make a murderer sympathetic, she negates even the universal truth that she is ostensibly trying to teach as a moral lesson. The dramatic power of the play depends on the realization by Henriquez that he has not only killed his friend, but has done so without any just provocation. The inconsistency of the Henriquez of Act I with the man in the last four acts, in addition to his lack of classic hamartia and peripety, result not only in an un-Aristotelian protagonist, but an un-Aristotelian characterization.

#### D. COUNT BASIL

Count Basil: A Tragedy<sup>7</sup> is the story of a renowned general who, while leading his army to fight a battle, falls in love with a beautiful princess during a pause for rest. The lady so completely bewitches him that he ignores all warn-

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<sup>7</sup>First published in A Series of Plays, I, 73-192.

ings that he should be on his way and, at her request, delays his march for two days. When news arrives that the battle has been fought and won without him, Basil is so ashamed that he retires to a cave and shoots himself, rather than face either the soldiers who did fight, or his own men who missed the battle.

In Act I, a crowd of citizens gathers to watch the pageantry as Princess Victoria leads her ladies in procession with offerings of gratitude to St. Francis for the restored health of her father, the Duke of Mantua. The citizens discuss the beauty of Victoria and also the nobility and prowess of Count Basil, commander of an army then passing through the city on its way to the battle of Pavia. Basil halts his army to let Victoria's procession pass and falls in love with the beautiful leader. After setting up the encampment, Basil's officers are discussing both their general and the beautiful princess when Basil joins them. He confides his infatuation for Victoria to Rosenberg, a kinsman who has acted as an elder brother throughout Basil's spectacular military career, and who now expresses apprehension at the Count's emotional state.

In Act II, the Duke of Mantua, who is secretly allied to the enemy Basil is going to fight, is unsuccessful in an attempt to persuade the Count to delay his march another day. The Duke invokes his daughter's aid and she flirts with Basil until he kisses her hand. Pretending to be offended, Victoria exacts the desired promise in exchange for her pardon of his presumptuous action. Rosenberg disapproves, and again warns Basil of the danger love holds for a soldier.

As Act III opens, Basil's officers are speculating on the cause of the delay when Geoffry, a disabled veteran of the wars joins them and changes the subject to soldierly courage and the rewards of military valor. Basil eloquently praises Geoffry's sacrifice of an arm and an eye for his country and takes him

off to make an example of him before the army. Lest a one-day delay prove insufficient to keep Basil from helping the Duke's secret enemies, Gauricio, the Duke's minister, dispatches an agent to incite the Count's troops to mutiny by telling them their leader is using their valiant spirit and willingness to shed blood to build his own reputation. During a ball at the Duke's palace, Rosenberg hears that news has been received by the Duke that a battle is imminent and that he is plotting to detain Basil. The Count, at this moment, is searching for Victoria among the masked dancers; finding her he ingenuously expresses his adoration, and her condescending coolness entrances him further.

In Act IV, Basil's officers are waiting for him to return to his quarters, after spending a chilly night standing in the cemetery below Victoria's window, waiting for a glimpse of the object of his worship. The officers inform him that the mutiny has begun, and he hurries to confront his troops. The Count threatens, inspires, and finally regains the loyalty of the soldiers, but still ignores Rosenberg's warning of the Duke's treachery, because he attributes it to his kinsman's dislike of Victoria. Basil is so offended at Rosenberg's remark that he is bound by an artful woman that he declares their friendship is over. In desperation, Rosenberg reviews their life together in camp and field, and touches Basil so deeply that he not only agrees to leave at once, but even to forgo a parting scene with Victoria. One of her ladies interrupts at that moment to bring Basil an invitation to accompany the princess on the next day's hunt and his resolution is broken. During the hunt, Basil gives vent to another impassioned outpouring of his adoration of Victoria, to which she is still cool. A messenger follows them into the forest and reports that the battle of Pavia has been fought and won without the Count's help. Basil is overcome with shame and

says he will seek the only refuge of a disgraced soldier.

At the beginning of Act V, Basil has just spent another night beneath Victoria's window, and resists Geoffry's feeble attempt to restrain him from running off into the forest. He pauses for a soliloquy on the consequences of suicide before going into a cave with his two pistols to shoot himself. Rosenberg and the other officers hear the shots as they approach the cave and entering it, find the dying Basil. He says farewell to his officers, admits that a too proud heart has been his undoing, and asks Rosenberg to pray for him. Some of his soldiers arrive to testify that they still love and honor their general, and Basil dies. Victoria and one of her ladies grieve over the remains of the once noble man, and a servant reports that the Duke's treachery has been exposed and that he is receiving his just deserts.

In the main action of Count Basil, the general selfishly delays his army so that it does not arrive in time to help fight a battle, which results in his disgrace in his own eyes and in the eyes of his comrades in arms. According to Aristotle, the tragic protagonist should act within the organic unity of this action, and the word within implies that he should not engage in activities outside the plot. If he does, the principle of unity in the play becomes a man rather than an action. Basil's relationship to Victoria is essential to the organic unity of plot because she is presented as the direct, if insufficient, cause of his delay. But Basil participates in three other incidents that are not essential to the main action, and are included to reveal his ethical character. This purpose is sufficient to give them a necessary connection with the plot if the character revealed in them, in turn, makes the action of the dramatic personage necessary. But these three incidents show a Basil so radically different from the one who

participates in the main action that the incidents are not related to the plot.

The most significant, but unnecessary incident is the one in which Basil reclaims the loyalty of his mutinous troops. In this scene he is a calm and competent commander who knows how to use techniques of group psychology. He shocks the men with the thought that if they assume command of themselves, they lose the prestige of authorized military personnel and become nothing but banditti. He displays personal, physical courage by ordering his officers to put up their weapons and facing the men alone, with no weapon in his own hand. Having attracted attention, he uses the sentimental appeal of reminiscing about the times they have fought and bled together. In the resulting surge of camaraderie, he is perfectly safe in saying, "Obey, or murder me." (IV.ii.37) Their only response is an uneasy murmur of the story circulated by the Duke that they are being led into danger to increase their general's personal glory. Basil acts decisively in silencing the ringleader, then flatters the soldiers by saying that his pride in their valor prompted him to pledge them to the emperor. His final offer to let them seek their ease while he finds a place in the ranks of those in the thick of the battle shames them into a desire to return under the leadership of their valiant general. Basil is then so sure of his control that he becomes stern and forbids martial music until they have purged the day's shame with the blood of battle.

Immediately after this incident, there is another unnecessary one, in which Basil generously forgives Frederic, a junior officer who tries to use the mutiny as an excuse for assuming control of the troops. Such magnanimity is not related to either the stern army commander, or the slave of love who appears in the main action. In the third extraneous incident, Basil again shows his skill in playing on the emotions of his soldiers by eulogizing the disabled veteran, Geoffrey, as



an example of soldierly virtue. When Basil deals with his soldiers, he resembles the kind of character Miss Baillie wants to create when she says she has "grafted this passion," i.e., love, on a man "of a firm, thoughtful, reserved turn of mind, with whom it commonly makes the longest stay, and maintains the hardest struggle."<sup>8</sup> But in Basil, there is little struggle between his infatuation for Victoria and his supposedly abiding love of military glory. He struggles only once, before Rosenberg's short-lived success in persuading him that he should leave Mantua immediately. In the scenes with Victoria, the soldier succumbs to the hypnotic power of a diffident idol and drops his arms without a qualm. Since the main action of the play depends on Basil's actions in these scenes with Victoria, those in which he expertly handles his soldiers are extraneous, i.e., a violation of Aristotle's principle of organic unity.

The scenes in which Basil appears as a cool, competent general do confirm the reputation he enjoys among Mantuan citizens, his own army, and even his enemies. The citizens of Mantua characterize the brave Basil as a severe disciplinarian, but one who makes his men soldiers "at no dearer rate / Than he himself has paid."(I.i.19) One of his officers anticipates a short rest in Mantua, because "Basil is of flinty matter made, / And cannot be allur'd."(I.ii.20) His friend, Rosenberg admits he has one fault, "his too great love of military fame," (Ibid.) but says that when he fights:

. . .he wields a thousand swords;  
For 'tis their trust in his unshaken mind,  
.....  
Which makes his soldiers bold,---(Ibid.)

Even Gauricio pays tribute to Basil's steadfast devotion to the service of the

<sup>8</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 16.

emperor's wars when he hastily assures the Duke that it is futile to try to tamper with him. Basil confirms this characterization by being adamant to the Duke's pressing invitations to prolong his stay in Mantua, and by handling his troops with cool skill.

According to Aristotle's second principle, the protagonist's participation in the plot should be the necessary and probable result of his ethical character, i.e., the way he has acted in the past. But there is nothing in the early characterization of Basil that prepares for his infatuation for the unresponsive Victoria. As a vain, but diffident, young woman whom he has seen but twice and spoken with only once, Victoria is an insufficient cause for Basil's sudden defection from a duty he has performed devoutly throughout his soldierly life. Basil first sees Victoria as he halts his army to allow her procession to pass. This is a normal, courteous, and hence probable gesture, but the rest of his reactions to her transcend probability for a man of far less "firm, thoughtful, reserved turn of mind" than General Basil. While in the company of his officers, he rouses from his dreams of the princess only at the mention of her fair hand. He stammers in Victoria's presence, succumbs to her flirtatious airs, and kisses her hand, then admits her accusation of presumptuous conduct and meekly agrees to stay another day to gain her pardon. At the ball, he pours out his heart to a mask, and her revelation that she is Victoria only increases his ardor. When she leaves him, he stands for some time in the ecstasy of her memory, and spends the night in adoration beneath her window. Basil's second acceptance of Victoria's invitation to remain is not shown in the play, but his avowal of adoration, love, and worship in the forest the next day presupposes another abject surrender to her whim. Even when his military career is ruined, he spends his last

light on earth beneath her window, hoping to catch a glimpse of the beloved form. It is this series of actions by Basil, the slave of love, that ruins General Basil. It is possible that a man might suddenly develop a weakness for women, but without any previous indication of this facet of his character, such a development in Basil is neither necessary nor probable.

According to Aristotle, three types of incidents, i.e., suffering, peripety, and discovery, are singularly effective in arousing the emotions of pity and fear, particularly if they occur with necessity and probability. Basil's suffering is more convincing and sympathy-inspiring in the one scene in which Rosenberg succeeds in bringing his old and new loves into open conflict than it is in the scenes directly preceding and following his self-inflicted wounds. The suicide itself is not an improbable action when Basil is in the depths of despair and self-pity after he realizes that his career is ruined. It is the gap in the necessary sequence of events, i.e., the delay that is not a necessary result of the character of Basil before this action, that robs the consequent suffering, peripety, and discovery of much of their power to arouse the tragic response.

Thus, two radically different Basils emerge from the play, each represented with considerable vividness, but neither possessed of any necessary connection with the other. A man capable of two such different modes of action is unusual, if not unique. What he does may express a universal truth about the few men of whom he is a typical example, but Aristotle does not have this limitation in mind when he contrasts the particular truth of history with the universal truth of poetry. Basil's dual nature does not satisfy Aristotle's requirement that the tragic protagonist should express a universal truth about human nature.

These two Basils also fail to fuse into one personality, possessed of the

personal qualities Aristotle suggests for a protagonist who participates in an action that will arouse pity and fear in an audience. As a general in the emperor's service, Count Basil does enjoy great reputation and prosperity at the beginning of the play. From all reports he is a good commander, but in the action of this play, he does not have a good moral purpose. Real love is good in itself, and might conceivably take precedence over duty, but Basil's passion has none of the grandeur of the love that forgets self in devotion to the beloved object. Basil sacrifices a life of honor for a few moments of his own shallow pleasure, and by selfishly sacrificing himself in pursuit of love Basil leaves his allies to fight without him, disappoints his own men, and deeply hurts Rosenberg, whose love actually is selfless.

Although his mistakes in judgment are not made in pursuit of a good moral purpose, they are made while he is acting under Victoria's spell and so are foolish rather than vicious or depraved acts. They do have one characteristic of an Aristotelian hamartia: both times Basil agrees to postpone his march to Pavia, he does so in ignorance that the battle is so imminent. There is also a relationship between the decisions to delay and the peripety and discovery. Basil's mistake in thinking he has time to waste standing beneath Victoria's window, and pouring out his love to her unreceptive ear or to Rosenberg's unsympathetic one, results in the disgrace of the esteemed general. The action of this peripety could be regarded as complete when Basil receives a message, from the commander he failed to support, that he is no longer expected at Pavia, and is free to seek other quarters. It is not strictly necessary to follow his descent in the maudlin suicide of Act V, but this incident is a continuation of the main action, rather than a collateral appendage like the incidents with Geoffrey, Frederic, and

the soldiers. Basil realizes that his selfish conduct has caused the disaster as soon as the messenger gives his information. But he admits to Rosenberg that:

Too proud of heart, I did too much aspire;  
The hour of trial came, and found me wanting.(V.iii.46)

He mentions pride as the cause of his downfall once more before he dies, and this provides an interesting contradiction of the purpose of the author, i.e., to write a tragedy on love.<sup>9</sup> Basil realizes that he is responsible for his misfortune, but there is some confusion in his mind or in the mind of his author about how the responsibility is incurred.

Basil's infatuation with Victoria is an excellent example of the kind of behavior Aristotle proscribes when he says the character should be appropriate, i.e., to his social or political status, and should act in the play as he has presumably been brought up to act. Miss Baillie's desire to show how a passion, unresisted in its infancy, can drive even a strong man to disaster,<sup>10</sup> establishes this inappropriateness as deliberate. If the motivation, i.e., the object of his love were of greater stature or if Basil were presented as the passionate type of man who habitually follows beautiful women with his heart in his hand, it would not appear so inappropriate. Basil's infatuation is prolonged even beyond the point at which he realizes his foolishness has resulted in great misfortune. It is inappropriate for a soldier to break a life-time habit and ruin himself for such dubious pleasures as the two chilly nights of gazing up at a dark window. Rosenberg's attitude toward the infatuated Basil changes from shocked incredulity to impassioned pleading that he recollect himself, which is

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<sup>9</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

strong internal evidence that Basil is acting inappropriately. The passionate expressions of love which are out of proportion to the cause make this Basil more unreal than the cool manager of men who is dynamically convincing in his brief appearance. The pauses and minute evidences of agitation in the infatuated Basil do not make him seem so like the members of the audience that they will see themselves in such a gullible man. Aristotle admits that some people are naturally inconsistent, and allows for this by saying that such characters should be represented as consistently inconsistent. But inconsistency is not a trait of the single-minded general, nor is the passionate devotion to such an insignificant cause as Victoria prepared for by the characterization of the soldier who has served the rugged mistress, war, for so long. The behavior of Basil in the presence or under the influence of Victoria, on which the plot depends, is an inconsistency in the protagonist.

Inclusion of incidents to show an aspect of the character of the protagonist that is not essential to the plot action violates the organic unity of Count Basil. The main action does not proceed with probability and necessity from the basic character which Basil is supposed to possess, but from another, separately introduced character. Juxtaposition of these two characters results in such an unusual personality that the protagonist cannot express universal truth. Although Basil enjoys renown and prosperity enough to make his disgraceful end significant, his lack of good moral purpose prevents him from gaining the sympathy of the audience. Basil realizes that he has brought misfortune on himself, but he and the author are not in complete agreement about how this happens. The difference between the two Basils results in the failure of the protagonist to be appropriate, like the reality, or consistent.

## ORRA

Orra: A Tragedy<sup>11</sup> is the story of a young woman with a peculiar sensitivity to supernatural manifestations, who refuses to marry the son of her guardian. Hoping to terrify her into cooperation with his plans, the guardian sends her to his haunted castle. This environment, and her own craving for the thrill of fear itself put Orra in such an emotional state that the sudden appearance of a would-be rescuer destroys her sanity.

Act I introduces Glottenbal, the fatuous and vain son of Count Hughobert of Aldenberg, as the destined husband of Orra, the Count's ward. Another young man, Theobald, admires Orra, but does not seriously consider the possibility of such high aspirations, since his noble birth cannot compensate for his impoverished condition. Rudigere, an illegitimate Aldenberger, is also interested in Orra and her fortune, and resolves to make use of her peculiar sensitivity to ghost stories, to enthrall her. Hughobert and his wife, Eleanora, discuss their lack of success in pleading Glottenbal's cause with Orra as she gaily taunts Glottenbal about being unhorsed in the recent tourney. When Hughobert rebukes her, she withdraws to curb her unruly humor. Because Orra's guardian still wants to add her fortune to that of his own family, he agrees to Rudigere's suggestion that they confine her in a haunted castle and terrify her into cooperation.

In Act II, Orra half-seriously bewails the fate of women who must surrender all their property to husbands, and say:

. . . 'Take all, I pray,  
And do me in return the grace and favour  
To be my master.'  
(II.i.240)

Hartman tries to defend men as helpful mates, Theobald says he knows a man who

<sup>11</sup>First published in A Series of Plays: In which it is attempted to delineate the stronger passions of the mind. Vol. III (London, 1812), pp. 1-100.

would happily be her champion, friend, and devoted soldier, and Orra promises to keep him in mind. Orra tells her ladies of her dreams of entertaining on her own estate, where guests will occupy their evenings with songs and tales. Cathrina suggests that these might be:

. . . stories . . . of ghosts and spirits,  
And things unearthly, that on Michael's eve  
Rise from the yawning tombs. (II.i.241)

Orra asks if she believes one night of the year is more horrid than the rest, and Cathrina admits that it may be superstition, but cites the family legend of the haunting of Brunier's castle on that one night. Orra insists on a full account, although Alice reminds her that she is wont to pale at such narrations. Orra describes the pleasure she derives from the icy grip of her fear and Cathrina obliges her with the tale of an Aldenberg ancestor who murdered a hunter knight and buried his body in an unblest, unmarked grave, from which the uneasy spirit rises and makes a yearly, midnight visit to the castle, in search of his murderer or any true descendent of the house. Urston, the family confessor, brings news that Hughobert has decided to banish Orra until she is willing to accept Glottenbal, and counsels her to feign a disposition to obey. He assures her that Hughobert's failure to keep a trusty guardian's faith frees her to use what defense she can, but Orra proudly refuses to do so. Hughobert promises to send Rudigere along for protection, and Cathrina, for company, and insists that Orra leave at once--for Brunier's castle. This place of exile disturbs Orra, but not enough to make her relent.

Orra reacts to the atmosphere of the old castle in Act III, and when she resists Rudigere's advances, he reminds her that they share the same relationship to the ancestor who is responsible for the castle being haunted. The hounds of



the hunter knight begin to howl and the terrified Orra runs from her room in search of Cathrina. Finding Rudigere, instead, she listens to the hounds alone, for a time, but finally, in desperation, wakens him, although she still arrogantly refuses to consider his proposal of marriage as the price of her release. Theobald accidentally finds a band of outlaws near the castle, and after hearing of Orra's plight, their chief, Franko, suggests that since the morrow is St. Michael's Eve, they can make use of the secret passage leading to her tower prison and carry Orra off under cover of the legend of the ghost of the hunter.

Act IV opens as an outlaw brings Orra a letter from Theobald, explaining the rescue plan, and she goes to her room to read it, followed by Rudigere. Orra tells Cathrina about the letter, which she has had to throw into the fire, unread, to keep it away from Rudigere. To pass the time until the fateful hour of midnight, Cathrina suggests a story and Orra asks for one:

Touching the awful intercourse which spirits  
With mortal men have held at this dread hour.(IV.iii.253)

Orra reacts in her usual fashion, so Cathrina runs out for a restoring cordial. Orra tries to follow, but cannot open the door, and when a secret door opens to admit the form of a huntsman, she collapses. Theobald, as the huntsman, tries to revive her, but at Franko's insistence, hurries away with the senseless Orra.

A search of the castle for Orra in Act V is unsuccessful. In advance guard of the Aldenberg party takes Rudigere prisoner, at Hughobert's command, since a treacherous henchman has revealed his evil intentions. When Hughobert threatens to torture him until he reveals Orra's whereabouts, Rudigere stabs himself and inflicts an apparently minor wound on Glottenbal. A servant reports having heard Orra's voice in the forest. Franko guides the Aldenbergs to his camp, but when Theobald brings Orra before the company, she continues her wild ravings, despite

all attempts to penetrate her distraction. A messenger reports Glottenbal's death from the poison on Rudigere's dagger, and Hughobert accuses himself of having caused all the misery. Orra makes one final raving speech, and clutches desperately at Theobald and Hartman as the curtain falls.

Orra is the dramatic representation of the action in which a high-spirited young woman loses her reason in the extremity of her terror of supernatural manifestations. According to Aristotle, the protagonist should act within the organic unity of the plot. The action of the plot begins in Act II, when Orra chooses exile in the haunted castle rather than marry Glottenbal. In the next three acts, her terror mounts until she succumbs to it at Theobald's sudden appearance. The second scene of Act V completes the action with the ghastly revelation of the depth of Orra's misfortune. All her actions and reactions to Hughobert, Cathrina, and Theobald are an integral part of this plot action.

Orra also appears in two scenes before the one in which she makes her momentous choice. The entire first act and the first scene of Act II are devoted to exposition of the situation in which she finds herself, and to establishing her ethical character. According to Aristotle, the past actions of a dramatic personage should establish the qualities of ethical character which determine his future actions. In her early appearances, Orra does reveal qualities that make her subsequent actions necessary and probable. She shows spirited resentment of her position when she taunts Glottenbal about his ridiculous performance in the tourney. In her conversation with Theobald and Hartman, she shows the independence of spirit that results from her pride. In the same scene she displays an active imagination when she explains her future plans to her ladies, and first reveals her predilection for ghost stories by her eager response to Cathrina's

suggestion that they would be a good form of entertainment for her future guests. The stubbornness with which she insists on hearing about the family ghost, despite Alice's advice, her emotional disturbance on hearing it, and her enthusiastic description of the pleasure she derives from fear, show those qualities, pride and fear, on which the action of the story depends. The encounter with Urston gives further evidence of her pride. When such an Orra comes into conflict with Hughobert, it is eminently necessary and probable that she will be firm in her refusal to marry Glottenbal, which is, in effect, a choice of exile.

Orra's suffering in the castle is not the physical kind of which Aristotle gives examples, but her terror is undeniably painful and ultimately disastrous. This suffering is the necessary and probable result of the character that has been established in the first part of the play. Her fear of what may happen in the castle is intensified by the lack of any solace. Orra's antagonist in the castle, as well as the indirect cause of her banishment, is Rudigere. Her pride prevents her from accepting the escape he offers her, and even from turning to him for reassurance of her fears. These fears are fostered rather than allayed by Cathrina, who suggests telling tales and helps Orra indulge her fondness for the icy pleasure of terror by acceding to her request for a ghost story on the fateful night. Having acted under the influence of pride and fear, Orra's emotional condition has become such that Theobald's appearance is a shock that her sanity cannot withstand. Theobald's appearance is such a shock because Orra did not read the letter of explanation he had sent. Rudigere's behavior throughout the play explains why it should be necessary for her to throw the letter into the fire, unread. There is only one incident in Orra's career in the play that threatens the principle of necessity and probability. Her arrival at the castle, two

days before St. Michael's Eve, is an unexplained coincidence necessitated only by the author's desire to make use of the Aldenberg ghost's yearly visit.

Miss Baillie is aware that her story may not convince sophisticated nineteenth century minds, and so reminds her readers that the action has been located in the superstition-ridden fourteenth century.<sup>12</sup> But she believes that superstitious fear, particularly of ghosts and the returning dead "is so universal and inherent in our nature, that it can never be eradicated from the mind, let the progress of reason or philosophy be what it may."<sup>13</sup> She also expresses her belief that "the catastrophe is such as Fear . . . does more commonly produce than any other passion."<sup>14</sup> The author at least believes Orra's actions express a universal truth and though it is hard to contest her statements on any ground but personal skepticism, that is at least as valid as any proof she offers. The perennial popularity of ghost stories does not prove the existence of an innate human superstitious fear of ghosts. Orra's fear is not unique, but the skeptical twentieth century would regard it as unusual, and not universally true of human nature. Miss Baillie's second generalization has the support of psychological evidence and, given such a character as Orra, the catastrophe itself can qualify as universal truth applicable to the limited number of people with such a psychic sensitivity.

As a tragic protagonist, Orra has an easily recognizable, good moral purpose, i.e., she wants to avoid a loveless marriage. However, she does not possess the heroic stature of the Aristotelian ideal. Orra is the ward of Hughobert, and

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<sup>12</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 228.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

for all her high spirits and pride, her wit and personal charm, she is still subject to the whims of her guardian. Hughobart's power over Orra does not impair her freedom of will, but does reduce the height from which she can fall. Although she is financially and personally attractive enough to interest Glottenbal, Rudigere, and Theobald, she does not enjoy a great reputation. Even after Hughobert has handled her estate for some years, it is still of attractive proportions, but the estate is hers in name only. Her dependence on a guardian or potentially, on a husband, does not constitute the enjoyment of prosperity. The only things she possesses, whose loss would constitute a fall, are her mind and body. This reduces her to the same level as any member of the audience.

Orra chooses banishment in preference to acceptance of Glottenbal before she knows where she will be sent. She still refuses Glottenbal even when she knows that her exile will be in the ominous Brunier's castle, although she does not realize at that time how delicate her mental balance is. She makes another choice when she asks Cathrina to tell her a tale of the awful intercourse of spirits with mortal men. This choice is made in ignorance of the fact that Theobald has already arranged to appear in the guise of the huntsman at the moment when her sovereignty of reason will be least secure. Any of these choices, in ignorance of the true state of affairs, could qualify as an Aristotelian hamartia, i.e., a mistake or error of judgment. All of them are causes, remote or proximate, of the peripety, i.e., her plunge into insanity. According to Aristotle, this is the neat and economical, ideal relationship of hamartia and peripety.

However, the nature of the catastrophe prevents the protagonist from completing the ideal cycle by realizing the relationship of hamartia and peripety. Orra never realizes how close she is to insanity, and suddenly, it is too late

for her to realize anything. The name of Brunier's castle does awaken a sense of forboding, and the discovery that Rudigere, not Cathrina, is the only possible companion to share the terror of the howling hounds is a shock to Orra, but these do not rank with the dramatically powerful discovery by the protagonist that he is the victim of unintentionally, self-inflicted misfortune.

Miss Baillie says she has "made Orra a lively, cheerful, buoyant character, when not immediately under" the influence of her fear of the supernatural.<sup>15</sup> The author also believes that those "who possess strong imagination, quick fancy, and keen feeling are most easily affected by this species of Fear,"<sup>16</sup> and therefore tries to create an Orra who possesses these qualities. The scenes in which Orra taunts Clottenbal about the tourney, entertains Theobald and Hartman in the garden, talks with her ladies and Urston, and even the one in which she gazes at the twilight landscape from the castle rampart, prove the author successful in her intention. None of these attributes impeaches Orra's appropriateness to the status of the heiress who is Hughobert's ward. Orra is proud and rebellious, but in her situation, she has little chance to show her resentment except by bitterly clever words. One of Aristotle's examples of inappropriateness is a clever woman, but he is giving an example that is valid in his age and civilization. Cleverness in a woman of the fourteenth century European civilization does not violate the principle of appropriateness. Although there is some question of the universality of fear of the supernatural, such fear is not inappropriate to Orra's personality.

Miss Baillie may feel that, since her heroine is closer in rank and reputation to the members of the audience than her generals and kings, there is less

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<sup>15</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 229.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

necessity to describe her actions in detail. At any rate, there are few deliberate attempts to include minutiae which, according to the author's theory, are the best method of making a character seem "like" the audience. Eleanora mentions that Orra has paused in the corridor to stroke a hound, and the stage directions for Orra's display of terror are extensive, but these are the only examples of use of this technique.

That Orra is consistently proud can be seen in her rejection of Glottenbal, in her refusal of Urston's counsel, and in her resistance to Rudigere. Her manner is lofty even when she promises to remember Theobald if she ever wants the kind of man he offers. She is also consistent in seeking the icy pleasures of fear. She eagerly accepts Cathrina's offers to tell ghost stories, and even asks for one. Any question of inconsistency arises from the combination of haughty defiance of Hughobert and fear of the supernatural in her personality. But in Orra's case, pride actually fosters fear, since it makes her refuse the advice that she avoid situations that produce the dangerous symptoms of terror.

Miss Baillie notes, in her preface, that fear is regarded as less adapted to dramatic purposes than any other passion, because of the danger that it will degrade the protagonist.<sup>17</sup> In answering this objection, she says that the admiration of courage is based on the universality of fear, concludes that such a universal passion will have interest in drama as it does in real life, and reasons that, as an object of interest, a character who is afraid will not necessarily be abject.<sup>18</sup> This generalization is more obviously true than the one ascribing the particular fear of the supernatural to mankind in general. And even

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<sup>17</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 228.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 228-229.

this less common fear does not reduce Orra below the standard set for Aristotle's ideal protagonist since it is necessary in the plot.

The early point of attack in Orra, followed by one and a half acts of exposition, is not a violation of the principle of organic unity. The timing of Orra's arrival at the castle is the only violation, and that a minor one, of the principle of necessity and probability. There is universal truth in the catastrophe in the limited application to a character such as Orra is. This protagonist is projected in a manner that would arouse pity and fear in the audience, if the character of Orra had sufficient stature to do so. This lack of initial height from which to fall, due to her status as a woman who resents but accepts the limitation of her position, is one of two important failures of Orra to achieve the Aristotelian ideal for a tragic protagonist. The other failure is the impossibility of Orra's realization that she has actually chosen the means that result in the catastrophe of her madness.

#### F. OSTERLOO

The protagonist of The Dream: A Tragedy,<sup>19</sup> the good and famous general, Osterloo, finds himself confronted with evidence of a murder he committed ten years before. The circumstances of the situation make him suspect that some supernatural agency is now seeking retribution. He is so terrified of facing punishment after death, without any chance to expiate the crime in life, that he dies before a death sentence can be carried out.

Exposition in The Dream begins in Act I, with the monks, Jerome and Paul, discussing their recent dreams, in which a majestic figure has told them how to save their monastery from the plague that is devastating the area. They are in-

<sup>19</sup>First published in A Series of Plays, III, 101-171.



pressed, but Jerome sees little chance of fulfilling the condition of the revelation that involves General Osterloo's army. A sudden commotion outside the gate, occasioned by the approach of that very army, however, convinces them it is their duty to inform the prior. The peasants indirectly characterize Osterloo as a commander who is sometimes affable and indulgent, sometimes severe with his men, but always the object of their pride. He has frequently been victorious, but even in defeat, has never shown his back to the enemy. The Prior explains to Osterloo that, according to the dream, the safety of the monastery depends on a night of penance for long-concealed guilt, by some man from his army. He insists on obeying the vision in choosing the man by lot, and Osterloo wonders if fate or chance is operative when the lot falls to him. The general is too honest to accept an officer's suggestion that they exchange and sends the army on its way. Morand, an officer in the service of the Prior, discusses Osterloo with Agnes who is gathering details of the excitement to recount to her mistress, Leonora, who lives in a nearby castle and is later revealed to be an old friend of Osterloo. As the monks describe their vision, Osterloo shows increasing agitation at mention of the strangers' burying vault and the figure's concealed right side. The monks observe that the Prior also is being affected by this information. When a peasant reports that a grave has been discovered in the spot indicated in the revelation, the company hastens to view it.

Act II opens in the burying vault, as the Sexton tells Morand of his surprise that the grave was dug and filled during his absence some ten years before, by a hermit named Baldwick, who has recently died. The monks arrive; the Sexton opens the coffin and reports that the right hand is missing. Osterloo, now violently disturbed, asks to speak privately with the Prior, but the Prior, who is

also betraying agitation, says there must be witnesses for such an interview. In the Prior's study, Benedict points out the coincidence of Jerome's dream occurring soon after hearing the death-bed confession of Baldwick, and of the same vision replacing the usual subject of Paul's nocturnal fancies only after hearing Jerome's story. The general confesses premeditated murder of the man whose body was then buried by Baldwick, as a means of atonement for his part, as Osterloo's servant, in the crime. Osterloo tells how the noble stranger stole the love of his lady. Tormented by jealousy, yet unable to demand satisfaction because of the stranger's physical disability, the general laid wait in a narrow mountain pass and slew him. The name of the murdered man increases the Prior's agitation and he begins to speak of Osterloo as a murderer rather than as a penitent. Osterloo explains that his active army life has left little time for reflection on the crime, but the Prior's ominous threat of Divine retribution prompts him to beg for a severe form of expiation, since he prefers atonement in this world to the justice he has now begun to fear in the next. The Prior tells Benedict that Osterloo's immediate death is the only reparation he will accept, since the murdered man was his own brother. When Osterloo hears that the death sentence will be carried out before daybreak, he reasons and pleads for delay without success, then makes a valiant but brief and futile attempt to fight his way out. Benedict does not concur in the sentence and is glad to leave the monastery in response to a request for a monk to attend a dying lady at Leonora's castle. While waiting for the monk, Leonora tells Agnes of her interest in Osterloo, who was once a friend of her late husband. She admits that she was greatly attracted to the general, but nobly suppressed her feelings as a good wife should. She is therefore eager to help Benedict effect Osterloo's rescue and she, Agnes, and Benedict

start for the monastery. A messenger follows them with news of the unexpected arrival of guests at the castle and Agnes returns to welcome them.

Act III is in the monastery prison where Osterloo is almost overwhelmed by apprehension at the prospect of having to face post-mortem punishment so suddenly. Leonora gains entry to the prison, disguised as a monk. Osterloo recognizes her and explains that he fled, years before, only for the sake of virtue. She assures him it makes no difference to her that he is a murderer. When the key provided by a treacherous monk proves too small for the door, Osterloo's despair gives him the strength to break it down. The Prior's soldiers, already in pursuit, catch Leonora, and when Osterloo returns for her, he is outnumbered and recaptured. The speculation of monks and soldiers on the difference between active and passive courage and the current state of Osterloo's nerve, is interrupted by a bell announcing the hour of execution. Osterloo is already kneeling to receive the blow when the imperial ambassador arrives to forbid the execution. Raising the limp body of Osterloo, Benedict and Leonora discover that he is dead. The ambassador accuses the Prior of sorcery and is skeptical of Jerome's explanation that such a brave general could have died of fear. He promises, in the name of his imperial master, to punish the Prior for having used his authority for private revenge, by replacing him with a worthier man, viz., Benedict, and commands a soldier's funeral for Osterloo.

The main action of The Dream is the fall of a soldier, brave enough with a weapon in his hand, fighting against mortal adversaries, but so terrified of the post-mortem consequences of a repented deed of passion, that he dies of fear. According to Aristotle's theory of tragedy, this main action should be the principle of organic unity; on such a basis, the entire Leonora episode is unneces-

sary. However, Joanna Baillie's purpose in writing this play<sup>20</sup> is to show how a usually courageous man can be dominated by the passion of fear of death, and that end determines what incidents she includes and how she develops the action. The addition of suspense or love interest are possible excuses for the episode, but neither has any theoretical basis in Aristotle or Baillie. Apparently the author wants to give Osterloo another opportunity, besides the first fight with the Prior's soldiers, to display his active courage, and to show another instance of his power to command the respect of his fellow men and women. Since these two aspects of Osterloo's personality are adequately brought out elsewhere, the Leonora episode serves no purpose. In contrast to this violation of organic unity, Benedict's opposition of the Prior and his skeptical attitude toward his dreaming brothers are not unnecessary. His questions expose the factual basis of the dreams, Osterloo's motive for the murder, and the Prior's motive in seeking revenge. Benedict is unnecessary only as one of the recipients of poetic justice. This administration of poetic justice in the last few lines of the play is as unnecessary as the Leonora episode, and it has less intrinsic interest.

Miss Baillie is eager to explain how an actively brave man like Osterloo can be so stricken by fear of death. She expounds her theory in the preface, cites two examples of similar events in history,<sup>21</sup> and even belabors the point in the play itself. Her anxiety to vindicate herself on the charge of having included an improbable thing in her story is the result of experience with people who are reluctant to "receive characters which are not drawn agreeably to the

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<sup>20</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 229.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

received rules of dramatic dignity and commonplace heroism."<sup>22</sup> After Osterloo has drawn the lot, there is no violation of the principle of necessity and probability in his character and actions. But two events, on which the entire action depends, are serious violations of this principle. The approach of Osterloo and his army, only a few seconds after Jerome has said they are not going to march near the monastery, is entirely unexplained. This sudden appearance may lend credence to the dreams, so far as the monks are concerned, but it does not increase the faith of the audience in the necessity of the events in the story. The second violation occurs when Osterloo draws the black scroll. Miss Baillie realizes this is improbable, but simply says it "must be conceded to me as a providential direction, or happy coincidence."<sup>23</sup> The arrival of an imperial ambassador is another incident that has no necessary or probable basis in the action, but it is not a critical issue in the main action. The only necessity or probability that will provide for these three coincidences is the author's necessity to confine Osterloo in the monastery overnight, under circumstances that will foster fear of supernatural justice, and provide some means of proving that he does die of fear. This is not the same kind of author-determination of protagonists that Aristotle approves of in Sophocles, where the author determines the choices of his protagonists.

The case of Osterloo is so unusual that Miss Baillie feels a need to defend its credibility. Osterloo's disintegration at the prospect of a sudden fate which has only recently been apprehended as terrifying, is a possible thing, but it is more akin to the particular truth of history than it is to the universal

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<sup>22</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

truth of poetry. Administration of poetic justice by the imperial ambassador suggests that the author has this principle in mind, rather than, or in addition to, a truth about human nature. Unless she has such a purpose, there is no reason for appending the ambassador's last speech to an action that is completed by Osterloo's death. But even if the fact of poetic justice is the universal truth the author intends to express, it does not qualify as an example of the Aristotelian concept of the universal truth a tragic protagonist should express.

The attempt to discover the qualities of Aristotle's ideal tragic protagonist in Osterloo is easily successful on the first point. At the beginning of Act I, the general is described as a man enjoying prosperity and great reputation and his personal appearance confirms the character given him in the peasant's gossip. He is concerned that his soldiers get to the encampment at Martigny before nightfall, but will not tolerate their opposition to his orders, even when their motive is devotion to him. Osterloo's acceptance of the lot proves that he is the kind of officer who is willing to do anything he would expect of his men. This principle and his innate honesty may be more potent motives for his willingness to do a night's penance than a desire to save the well-fed monks, but any one of these would constitute a good moral purpose. The action of the play depends on Osterloo's ten-year old crime of passion, but that crime is antecedent to the action in which Osterloo's purpose is good.

Osterloo does have an Aristotelian hamartia, although it is not as immediately obvious as his good moral purpose. It certainly cannot be the ten-year old crime, which, according to Aristotle's ethics, is both voluntary and bad, even though the provocation was great and it was committed under the influence of passion. Another possibility is Osterloo's delay in confessing the crime,

due to his failure to realize the seriousness of the consequences in the next world of sins not atoned for in this. The intervening years intensify rather than diminish remorse in such a passionate nature as his, when he finally does realize the seriousness of the situation. However, that delay and the consequent magnification of remorse are actually antecedent to the action of the story. A third possibility is Osterloo's ignorance of, or failure to realize the extent of God's mercy to repentant sinners, which should have counteracted his despair at the imminent prospect of facing his judge. However, this is a theological question and not treated as a significant issue in the play. The last possibility is Osterloo's choice to accept his lot instead of the suggestion of an officer that they exchange places. Osterloo is ignorant of the relationship of the Prior to the murdered man, a material fact which is the cause of the Prior's drastic revenge, and ultimately of the peripety for the protagonist.

Osterloo's fall is not complete until he has found release from the agony of his terror in death, i.e., when he is no longer capable of recognizing anything. He does realize the necessity to expiate his crime and the inevitability of retribution, but this is not recognition of his hamartia per se. If the hamartia is acceptance of a night of penance at the monastery, in ignorance of the fact that his victim was the Prior's brother, he has no chance to see a connection between the fact and the consequence of the extreme penance the Prior wants to exact, because it is never mentioned in his presence. Thus, the interrelationship of hamartia, peripety, and discovery lacks the neatness and economy of the Aristotelian idea. Osterloo makes other discoveries when he recognizes Leonora and realizes that the treacherous monk has given her the wrong key, but these are of minor significance in the plot and have no great emotional attraction.

At times Miss Baillie appears even more interested than Aristotle in a sympathetic characterization, and her theoretical emphasis on the naturalness of the character or his likeness to the members of the audience. According to her theory, the best method of accomplishing this purpose is to include minute details of behavior such as Osterloo's mistake of water for wine, to indicate the extent of his perturbation during the recital of the monk's dreams, his fits of abstraction, his bodily contortions during his confession and in the extremity of his despair, his fumbling attempt to take off a ring before he stumbles to the execution block, and the significant pauses. Miss Baillie gives detailed stage directions for the execution of these maneuvers, and has great confidence in their power to convince the audience that the character is real. The excess of emotion in which Osterloo indulges is indicative of his terror and loss of control and makes him unusual rather than untrue to life.

The appropriateness of fear in a courageous general is a moot point, but it is the point Miss Baillie is making in this play. Except for this facet of his character, Osterloo's behavior is appropriate to his status. He is consistently unsuccessful in love affairs, e.g., Leonora and the lady he lost to the noble stranger, and he is consistently ready and able to show his competence in sword fights. This almost instinctive response to the heft of a sword, particularly in the second escape attempt, is less obviously consistent than the more slowly and logically developed reaction of terror at the prospect of death. The return of a man in Osterloo's emotional state, to rescue Leonora from the soldiers might be an instinctive reaction, but it is suspect, in view of the author's need to get him recaptured and her desire to prove his bravery in all situations except that which reveals his one weakness.



As a tragic protagonist, Osterloo is good and heroic enough to gain the initial sympathy of the audience, and hold it even in the convincing representation of his terror. After three acts of preparation, his death is a credible catastrophe. However, by making one man the principle of unity and choosing incidents with this end in view, Miss Baillie violates the principle of organic unity by including Osterloo's relationship with Leonora. She also violates the principle of necessity and probability by basing the action on two unexplained and improbable coincidences. The unusual nature of the idea she presents in this play is closer to the singularity of history than it is to the universality of poetry, but it does answer the obvious questions of appropriateness and consistency in the protagonist. But these questions are obvious, and the close analysis of the basic idea that is necessary to answer them reveals that concentration on the man rather than on the action as a whole results in violation of two of the basic principles of Aristotle's theory of tragedy.

#### G. ETHWALD

Ethwald: A Tragedy<sup>24</sup> is a ten-act saga, divided into two, five-act parts, in which the protagonist is dominated by the passion of ambition. Miss Baillie is interested in showing the rise of the passion, through those stages in which it might be resisted, as well as the consequences of allowing it to proceed unchecked.<sup>25</sup> At the end of Act V, when Ethwald is on his death-bed, she finds that he has not completely surrendered to the passion and still has some good

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<sup>24</sup>First published in A Series of Plays, in which it is attempted to delineate the stronger passions of the mind. Each passion being the subject of a tragedy and a comedy. Vol. II (London, 1802), pp. 109-360.

<sup>25</sup>Baillie, Works, p. 11.

impulses left. She revives him and adds another five acts to complete the destruction of the protagonist through the consequences of his passion. Such great length in the work on ambition is the logical result of the author's original design in the series on the passions and the nature of the particular passion, since ambition is the most abiding passion and is of slower growth than the others.<sup>26</sup> The author, herself, suggests, some years after their composition, that either part might be seriously considered as a "playing" tragedy.<sup>27</sup> But this is a compromise of her original intention for the sake of a subsequently conceived desire to see her plays produced, at a time when there is little interest in the subtle delineations of character which she fancies are her forte. Since the author's original intention was to regard both parts of Ethwald as a unit of idea, though not a unit of action in the Aristotelian sense, they will be discussed as a unit in this thesis. By regarding the ten acts of Ethwald as a unit, the play resembles the structure of Romero, although it is inflated to twice the size. In both plays, the protagonist has an opportunity to reform, at the approximate middle of the drama, but he refuses the opportunity and resumes the habit that has threatened and eventually does lead him to destruction.

In Act I, Ethelbert, a noble thane, and Selred, the elder brother of Ethwald, discuss the effect of confinement in his father's castle on Ethwald's youthful spirits. The father, Mollo, is using this means of preventing the fulfillment of a prophecy that the destruction of his line will occur through the valor of his youngest son. The restless Ethwald is musing on his seemingly limited destiny and his dreams of military glory, when Bertha, his father's ward

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<sup>26</sup>Baillie, Works, pp. 104-105.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

and his own childhood playmate, tries to lift his gloomy mood. When a messenger brings news that an army is being recruited to defend the kingdom of Mercia against the English invaders, Ethwald seizes a sword and shield and scales the castle walls to join the defenders.

Following the battle in Act II, the victorious Mercian king praises Ethwald who has won "first honors" of the day in his first battle. The king's nephew, Edward, who is the heir to the throne, pledges his undying friendship to Ethwald, whose bravery in battle he admires but cannot emulate. Ethwald enjoys a brief reunion with Bertha, in which he saddens her by the expression of his ambitions and his hasty return to the king's army. Bored after a few weeks of peace, Ethwald and Alwy, an artful adventurer, devise a plan to reactivate the border-land hostilities.

Act III opens as the Mercians are retreating in this action, but Ethwald's valor saves the day and wins further personal praise from the king. Ethelbert's concern over the evidences of ambition given by his protegee is quieted by Ethwald's assurance that his sword will protect but not destroy the feeble.

In Act IV, Ethwald is pondering over his own ambition and the murmurings he has heard among the troops, against the Mercian king whom they regard as weak, Ethelbert, who has had previous dealings with the spirit world, arranges an interview between Ethwald and a Druid mystic, in the hope that it will dissuade him from trying to realize his ambitions. In the Druid's cave, Ethwald sees a brief vision of crown and scepter supplanted by a representation of the woe of Mercia's people. He tries to swear that he will never be the cause of such misery, but is interrupted by three voices. The next vision is an agonized but crowned figure who disappears with the warning that it represents Ethwald. He

tries to swear that though he might meet a tyrant's end, he will never be a tyrant, but again is interrupted by the three mysterious voices. Ethwald is glad to grasp Ethelbert's hand and return to daylight after the fearful bout. But the experience is quickly forgotten when Alwy asks Ethwald to lead the group of chiefs who are rebelling against the king. The first step in the plan is to confine the king's heir, Edward, in the dungeon of a castle, the second to kill the aging king, and the third to fortify Ethwald's position on the throne by marriage to the king's daughter, Elburga. Ethelbert and Selred do not approve of these maneuvers, but are powerless to prevent or revoke them.

At the beginning of Act V, a fanatic, still loyal to the memory of the late king, stabs the triumphant Ethwald during a procession. Ethelbert succeeds in convincing him that he should repent of his bloody deeds before death and Ethwald arranges for the release of Edward and the regency of Ethelbert before he loses consciousness. Ethelbert eulogizes the comatose Ethwald as a brave and daring soul whose ambition has been arrested by death, and the curtain falls on Part I.

Act I of the second part of Ethwald begins in Edward's prison, as he joyfully receives news of his release, but another messenger arrives immediately to countermand the order. Ethelbert and Selred are disappointed that Ethwald's miraculous recovery has resulted in a resumption of his harsh rule, rather than the reformation they had hoped for. For personal motives, Alwy begins to conspire against the tyrant he has helped to place on the throne. Ethwald listens to the suggestions from Hereulf, a young nobleman acting under Ethelbert's guidance, that Mercia is being ruined to no purpose by continued wars. The king assures the peace-loving nobles that he loves Mercia as much as they do, but feels that the decisions on policy should be strictly up to him.

In Act II, Ethelbert, Selred, and Hereulf view the bloody aftermath of another Mercian victory and speculate on the doubtful future of the country if Ethwald continues to rule. After the same battle, Ethwald confides to Alwy that he has begun to aspire to the crown of England, also, and that as long as Edward lives, he is a potential rallying point for dissatisfied Mercians left at home while the king is fighting foreign wars.

Ethwald is both fascinated and revolted by the scene of Edward's murder in Act III, but its accomplishment leaves him free to carry his conquests beyond Mercian borders. Before he can leave, however, Alwy brings him news of a plot among the discontented nobles, headed by Ethelbert, Selred, and Hereulf, so Ethwald orders their imprisonment.

Ethwald realizes, in Act IV, that these former friends must die if he is to be free of their threat to his security. In prison, Ethelbert tells Hereulf and their companions about his early experience with Ethwald, who once had:

. . . a heart inclined,  
 Though somewhat dash'd with shades of darker hue,  
 To truth and kindly deeds.  
 But from this mixed seed of good and ill  
 One baleful plant in dark strength rais'd its head,  
 O'ertopping all the rest; which fav'ring circumstance  
 Did feed and strengthen to a growth so monstrous,  
 That underneath its wide and noxious shade  
 Died all the native plants of feebler stem.(IV<sub>2</sub>.iii.188)

Ethwald's plan for executing these men is to select a daily victim, by lot, and it is Ethelbert's fate to be the first. His farewell to his companions counsels courage and hope that conditions will improve, but reveals no personal hatred for Ethwald.

In Act V, Alwy is apprehensive about Ethwald's reaction to the news that Hereulf has escaped, since several recent reverses have made him irascible.

Ethwald is further discomfited by the disturbance of his rest by the ghosts of those he has murdered in his rise to power, but his spirit revives to plan the now imminent advance against the English. On the eve of this new campaign, Hereulf and his cohorts surround Ethwald's castle and gain admittance through the gate by joining a group of peasants who are frightened by the aurora borealis which is filling the sky. Ethwald seeks the safety of his well-lighted room during a particularly terrifying bout with the ghosts of his victims, and Hereulf surprises him there. Ethwald is fatally wounded in the ensuing sword fight and Hereulf prophesies a peaceful future for Mercia, over the body of her late tyrant.

Since the author's moral purpose in writing dramas necessitates that she show both the rise and fall of Ethwald, her ten-act structure includes two actions, according to the Aristotelian concept of organic unity of action. The first action ends with Ethwald's achievement of the crown at the end of Act IV of Part I. In the fifth act of Part II, the second action ends when he loses it in death that results from the domination of his insatiable ambition. But this is not the basis on which Miss Baillie divides the work into parts. She extends the first part to include what appears, at the time, to be Ethwald's death scene. Part I, therefore, includes more than the organic unity of action of Ethwald's rise. The nearly fatal attack on Ethwald gives him, in effect, a chance to start over, but he quickly resumes his ambitious designs instead of actualizing the temporarily entertained purpose of amendment. Except for this dalliance with the idea of reformation, which is adequately motivated by his belief that he is near death, and two brief encounters with Bertha, in which he shows some pity for her, Ethwald acts exclusively to satisfy his passion of ambition. Even though there are two distinct units of action in the strictly Aristotelian sense, i.e., rise

and fall, Ethwald's consistent motivation gives an effect of unity to the entire ten acts. Thus it can be said that the protagonist of Ethwald follows the spirit, if not the letter, of the Aristotelian principle that he should act within the organic unity of the plot.

Ethwald's spirited and determined quest for something to satisfy his ambition and his desperate acts to keep what he has achieved, follow with necessity and probability from preceding events and the character he possesses, i.e., conforms to the second Aristotelian principle for the tragic protagonist. He quickly sheds his lethargy when Ethelbert mentions a valiant ancestor and resumes it only when the story tells how the ancestor was content to stop short of the crown. This action confirms Ethelbert's belief that there is something in the young man's breast that "no kindred owns to sloth or ease." (I.i.135) Ethelbert also mentions the "searching mind" (I.i.136) he has perceived in Ethwald and his own hopes to lead that mind to better things by helping him combat the learner's difficulty, with books about wars, and arms, and famous men. But Ethelbert's hope is unfulfilled since his pupil is overly fond of the stories themselves, "And from the means is heedless of the end." (I.i.136) Ethwald's adventurous spirit is currently being held in check by his father, who hopes to prevent fulfillment of the prophecy of the destruction of his line, by confining the youth to the castle.

Ethwald's passionate resentment of this restriction is natural and his decision to escape to the king's army, when it comes so tantalizingly close to the castle, is most probable. Fired with ambition and thrilled with his first

chance to do battle, his success in winning first honors of the day is equally probable. With such a thrilling beginning of his career, Ethwald is soon dissatisfied with the earldom with which he has been rewarded, and bored after a few days of peace. He saves the day for the Mercians in another battle, and the soldiers begin to mutter against the pious, old king and in favor of Ethwald as a desirable, war-like replacement. Although eager to respond to these flattering sentiments, Ethwald feels he is shackled by the love of Edward, the king's legitimate heir. The experience in the Druid's cave is temporarily terrifying and ominous, but the plan to kill the king, imprison Edward, and marry Elburga is too temptingly present to resist. His first probable reaction on being wounded and foreseeing death is to regret that he is "a powerful, but a passing storm, / That shall be soon forgotten!"(V.iii.165) As he grows weaker, Ethelbert's persuasion and his own sense of guilt support the probability of the belated regret for the damage he has done to Bertha, the king, and Edward. Since he is about to lose all in death, his attempt to make amends is a logical step.

Probable though this death-bed repentance is, its abandonment with the return of strength and the prospect of extending his boundaries is still more probable. For a character such as Ethwald is now established to be, the aspiration for the crown of England, the decision to have Edward killed, the imprisonment of his former friends, and even the order for their execution are all necessary reactions to the situations he faces. The brief struggle against his better nature that precedes these selfish decisions prepares for the torment he undergoes from the guilt-inspired ghosts of his victims. Both guilt and insatiable ambition make his speculation on the meaning of the aurora borealis a necessary



and effective prelude to death at the hand of Hereulf. Throughout this series of actions the necessity increases steadily, and produces an ideal example of the Aristotelian principle that the protagonist should act according to the principle of necessity and probability.

Ethwald contains much suffering, i.e., actions of a destructive or painful nature, such as murders, tortures, and woundings, and the like, to which Aristotle attributes great power to produce the tragic effect. There are two actual battle scenes and a third scene showing the corpse-strewn field after another battle. Both the king and Ethelbert are murdered on stage, but Edward's murder does not take place in view of the audience. However, the preceding scene, in which the ruffians announce their deadly intention and Edward announces his, to fight for his life, and the appearance of the bloody and disordered ruffians with their victim's body in the scene following the actual deed do not leave Edward's murder entirely devoid of emotional impact. Ethwald does not actively participate in these three murders, but having commanded them, he is inextricably involved in the suffering. Ethwald, himself, is the victim of two woundings, the almost fatal one off-stage and the fatal one on-stage. Ethwald's mental torment, when he is beset by the ghosts of his victims, certainly ranks with the physical suffering as a means of arousing the tragic response. Its effectiveness is due in no small measure to the emphasis on the fact that the necessity of all the rest of the sufferings lies in Ethwald's own ruthless pursuit of the goals of his ambition. The same cause also makes the peripety and discovery both necessary and emotionally powerful.

Ambition of one kind or another is a common trait in human nature. All ambitious men do not have Ethwald's natural qualifications or opportunities or good luck, but so situated, any man might act in the same manner as this protagonist does. He summarizes his life story when Elburga asks him if being King of Mercia is not enough. He says it may be enough for her to be a queen:

But to th' expanded and aspiring soul,  
To be but still the thing it long has been  
Is misery, e'en though enthron'd it were. (V2.v.196)

This is an excellent example of the Aristotelian principle that the tragic protagonist should express a universal truth.

But because this perpetually dissatisfied state of Ethwald's soul leads him to do evil deeds, he does not possess the personal qualities Aristotle suggests for the ideal tragic protagonist. Ethwald gives no indication of his potentiality for evil until he expresses dissatisfaction with a mere earldom and boredom with peaceful days, and suggests rousing Woggarwulf to an act of aggression so he will have a chance to fight again. But there is much earlier evidence of the intensity of his ambition in his passionate resentment of his father's restraint and the burst of tears that follow his lament, "I sit i' the shade! no starbeam falls on me!" (I.ii.137) The audience might well share Ethelbert's liking and sympathy for a young man with an innocently adventurous and ambitious spirit, but those feelings of sympathy rapidly disappear as the action of the play reveals the lengths to which he will go in the interests of self-gratification. Ethwald's prevailing moral purpose is not good. He is willing to utilize any means, good or evil, to attain ends that become increasingly evil in themselves as each end achieved proves unsatisfying. Ethwald's attempt to excuse his con-

duct on the grounds that the people want to replace a feeble monarch with a strong one, that Destiny has singled him out to restore Mercia's waning power, that the greater good of Mercia necessitates abandonment of ease for war, and that his love for Mercia drives him to assume dictatorial powers, do not even convince Ethwald. They certainly do not establish that he has the good moral purpose which an Aristotelian tragic protagonist should have.

Ethwald habitually acts to gratify his ambition at all costs, so his fall results from vice and depravity, not merely from an error of judgment made through ignorance of some material fact. Therefore, he does not have an Aristotelian hamartia. He does experience two peripeties that are significant, if not Aristotelian in their relationship to the hamartia. At the beginning of Part I, Ethwald is a likeable, ambitious youth and, at the end of Part II, he is an almost demented king who meets a justly deserved death. From the standpoint of the essential dignity of human nature, this is a fall. In the second unit of action, Ethwald begins as a feared but admired king and ends as a hated tyrant. This is also a fall, but neither is the Aristotelian type of unmerited misfortune that a good man unintentionally brings upon himself.

Ethwald's last speech indicates that he realizes his own instrumentality in the disastrous end that is approaching. The messenger reports an unusual light phenomenon in the northern sky, and Ethwald wonders aloud if it can mean that:

. . .the awful term is come,  
The fearful bound'ry of my mortal reach,  
O'er which I must into those regions pass  
Of horror and despair, to take my place  
With those who do their blood-earn'd crown exchange  
For ruddy circles of devouring fire: (V2.v.197)

In this speech there is realization not only of the fall from greatness, but also that the intended result, i.e., enjoyment of ever-greater power, is being replaced by its opposite, loss of all. This relationship of discovery to peripety is Aristotelian, even though the relationship of the fall and its cause is not.

Ethwald is the second son of a pettythane, whose ambition far exceeds the normal limitations of one so situated. But his ruthless pursuit of his goal is considerably more appropriate to his social status and his milieu than the Christian humanism of Ethelbert, which is almost an anachronism. Ethwald's fear of the ghosts is not inappropriate, but an indication, that his moral sense is deadened by insanity. Although he has ceased to obey the precepts of natural law, he has not lost all contact with its existence.

The excess of emotion that Ethwald displays in his violent burst of tears, when he fears that he is doomed to live and die in obscurity, does not make him unrealistic if it is considered in relation to the circumstances of his youth and high-spirited nature. The remainder of his emotional displays are also properly modulated to correspond to the provocation. The incident in which his resistance breaks the slender strand with which Bertha tries to pull him toward her is one of Miss Baillie's minutiae, which effectively conveys the idea that Ethwald has outgrown such childish games, and his tenderness to Bertha, when he perceives that he has hurt her, is a similar technique which makes him human and "like" the audience.

Two of Ethwald's actions raise the question of inconsistency, but both can be explained as consistent with his character and the provocation to action. His death-bed repentance is consistent with the behavior of an opportunist who

is looking for the best for Ethwald in every situation. When his hold on life and the fruits of ambition begins to relax before a power greater than his own, he hopes to make what provision he can for the future. His repugnance at the actual murders of the king and Edward is not inconsistent squeamishness but a natural reluctance to hurt those who have been good to him and are undeserving of the end he is decreeing for them.

Ethwald performs a series of actions, under the domination of the passion of ambition, that lead him both up and down the road to the throne. This change in the direction of his movement is a violation of the Aristotelian principle that the organic unity of plot consists in unity of action. But all Ethwald's actions are necessary and probable, not only for the unique personality of Mollo's son, Ethwald, but as examples applicable to many members of the human race. Therefore, Ethwald conforms to the second and third Aristotelian principles for an ideal tragic protagonist. Although Ethwald lacks the good moral purpose Aristotle deems necessary for the protagonist's ability to elicit the sympathy of the audience, and consequently does not have an Aristotelian hamartia, he experiences peripety and ultimately realizes his own instrumentality in his fate. His appropriateness, likeness to the reality of common experience, and consistency make him a credible if not thoroughly appealing character.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to consider seven of Joanna Baillie's protagonists in the light of the principles for the ideal tragic protagonist which Aristotle suggests in the Poetics. The Greek philosopher evolves his principles from a study of the good examples of the genre within his ken. Such a comparison is valid, since Miss Baillie's protagonists have characteristics, i.e., they perform actions and have qualities of ethical character which Aristotle discusses. But, since the Poetics is not an inflexible rule, the failure of Miss Baillie's practice to coincide with Aristotle's theory does not necessarily imply that her works should be condemned. It is not the purpose of this thesis to condemn or praise the plays. The verdict of the past century of neglect of them can be mentioned only as an interesting phenomenon. However, it is significant that this study reveals frequent instances in which the author departs from Aristotle's principles and some cases of incidental similarities. Consideration of Miss Baillie's dramatic theory and practice reveals the basic differences in purpose and the object of imitation that may have caused the differences in the means and manner of imitation.

Both Aristotle and Joanna Baillie recognize that men take an interest in their confreres, real or fictional, but they make different applications of this perceived phenomenon in the development of their respective theories of tragedy.

According to Aristotle, the purpose of tragedy is to arouse pity and fear in the audience; according to Miss Baillie, it is to improve men in the audience by direct or indirect application of the example of the protagonist to themselves. Both of these end results imply audience identification with protagonists. However, Aristotle's recognition of man's appetite for harmony and order prompts him to make the object of imitation an organic unit of action, while Joanna Baillie's concern for audience identification with the protagonist leads her to make a man the principle of unity. Consequently, the story she tells may or may not have the organic unity of plot that Aristotle advocates. It is chance rather than design, that accounts for the conformity of De Montfort, Orra, and Romero, the partial conformity of Ethwald, and the non-conformity of Henriquez, Basil, and Osterloo with Aristotle's principle that the tragic protagonist should act within the organic unit of plot.

Aristotle emphasizes the principle of necessity and probability in the interest of insuring organic unity and convincingness, but because Miss Baillie is interested in a particular man who meets with a particular end, her interest is primarily in results, not in causes and their necessary relationship with the result. She allows the action to turn on coincidences in The Dream, De Montfort, and Orra. In Henriquez, she resorts to an artificially established atmosphere of suspicion in an attempt to make the protagonist's actions credible. However, after the characters of De Montfort, Romero, Ethwald, Henriquez, Orra, and Osterloo are established to be such as they are in the play, their subsequent actions follow with necessity and probability. Only Basil's dual nature constitutes an obvious violation of the principle that the protagonist

should act with necessity and probability.

Aristotle believes that the tragic protagonist should express universal truth about human nature, but although Joanna Baillie expects her protagonists to serve as virtually universally applicable examples, she relies on the commonness of passion in human nature to effect the application. However, the potentially possible domination of every man by his passions does not occur in reality and when the example is so obviously abnormal as De Montfort and Romero, or so unusual as Orra, Osterloo, Henriquez, and Basil, universality is lost in the particular eccentricity of the protagonist. Only Ethwald shows his passion—ambition—in such a way that he expresses a universal truth about human nature in the Aristotelian sense.

Miss Baillie's interest in the effect of unresisted or uncontrolled passion on a human being results in characters of a different moral temper than Aristotle's reason-dominated ideal man. Only Orra and Osterloo consistently have good moral purposes. Ethwald's ambition is not evil in itself, but he allows it to drive him to ignore the natural law in practice, and then it becomes clearly evil. De Montfort, Basil, Henriquez, and Romero, as victims of the passions of hatred, selfish love, and jealousy, have bad moral purposes. Therefore, only Orra and Osterloo, under the domination of fear, and Henriquez, to a limited extent, when he is under the influence of remorse, can appear as good or better than the average man. Only these three protagonists have the opportunity to gain the sympathy of the audience as Aristotle thinks the ideal tragic protagonist should do.



Henriquez, Basil, Osterloo, and Ethwald, in the second episode of his story, enjoy the great reputation and prosperity which Aristotle deems desirable in a tragic protagonist, De Montfort and Romero are not obviously so-endowed, and Orra is clearly lacking in this respect. Only two of Miss Baillie's protagonists, Orra and Osterloo, commit an error through ignorance that can qualify as an Aristotelian hamartia. However, Basil's foolish action is not the vicious or depraved type that Aristotle proscribes and Romero, De Montfort, Henriquez, and Ethwald exemplify. Ethwald and Romero both experience reversals in which they achieve the opposite of the intended result and these incidents are Aristotelian peripeties if not the more commonly represented falls which Ethwald, in the play as a whole, Basil, and Osterloo exemplify. Henriquez's altered condition at the end of the play is hard to categorize, since neither he nor the other members of the cast regard him as a fallen man. De Montfort and Romero are so depraved by passion at the beginning of the play that their actual commission of the crime of murder is not a significant change from the early formation of the intention to do such an act, and Orra lacks the initial stature to experience a significant descent.

According to Aristotle, the protagonist should realize his own instrumentality in his misfortune, but only Romero, Ethwald, and Henriquez clearly realize this fact, and Basil indicates that he possesses some insight into his situation. From the evidence in the play, De Montfort's realization is questionable, and the respective insanity and death of Orra and Osterloo preclude the possibility of their complete realization. No one of Joanna Baillie's protagonists reveals that neatness and economy of interrelationship between hamar-

tia, peripety, and discovery for which Lucas sees Aristotle's preference indicated. Osterloo experiences an approximation of this cycle but the incompleteness of his discovery is a serious defect in it.

Despite their fear, Orra and Osterloo are appropriate to their social or legal status, and except for their evil deeds, Henriquez and Ethwald are not inappropriate. Romero and De Montfort are debased specimens of humanity and inappropriate to the status of a gentleman, but this condition is necessitated by the plot. Basil's conduct is also inappropriate and necessary to the plot, but appears as a more serious violation of Aristotelian principles because it occurs in combination with inconsistency and unreality.

Basil is the only protagonist whose conduct is patently unlike the reality. For all the excesses of De Montfort and Romero, Henriquez, Orra, and Osterloo, their behavior is natural for such abnormal or unusual specimens of mankind as they are. Ethwald, perhaps because of the universality of his passion, has the greatest resemblance to the reality of normality. De Montfort, Romero, and Ethwald may be villains, but they are remarkably consistent ones, and Orra and Osterloo are also consistent in their behavior. Henriquez's passionate murder is not sufficiently motivated to be necessary, but once it is committed, his conduct is consistent. Basil is the only outstanding example of inconsistency among Miss Baillie's protagonists, and this trait is due to her intention to show how the passion of love operates on an unlikely candidate.

It is impossible to establish a hierarchy among the Aristotelian principles and then say that certain protagonists are the most Aristotelian because they display the most significant qualities or that they are the least Aristotelian

because of their deficiencies. But it should be obvious that none of these seven protagonists is typically Aristotelian. Miss Baillie's practice reveals two major divergences from Aristotle's theory. She ignores the principle of organic unity and employs a bad example, i.e., the results of uncontrolled passion, as the means of achieving what she believes to be the purpose of tragedy. Therefore, whatever their other merits may be, the protagonists of these seven plays in Miss Baillie's series on the passions are not tragic in the Aristotelian sense. Miss Baillie's plays are evidence of her belief that the passion shows its strength in contending with the opposite passions and affections of the mind and not with the external events of the play. The comparisons in this study have given the writer of this thesis a clearer understanding of Aristotle's ideas and also of the so-called psychological drama, through study of plays that are early examples of the modern tendency to locate the scene of action within the mind of the protagonist.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Ruth McGugan has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

September 23, 1948  
Date

C. J. Strakman, C.S.V.  
Signature of Adviser